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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 22 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Today we have Mr. Masse replacing Mr. Gerretsen and Mr. Waugh replacing Mr. Moore. Welcome back, both of you, from our last meeting.

I want to remind members and witnesses that the proceedings will be available via the House of Commons website. I also want to make you all aware that the webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entirety of the committee.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I would like to outline the following rules. Interpretation services are available for this meeting. You have the choice at the bottom of your screen to select floor, English or French.

Members and witnesses, you may speak in the official language of your choice. With the latest Zoom version, you may now speak in the language of your choice without the need to select the corresponding language channel, which basically means you can select the language you want to hear and you can speak any language that you would like.

If you have the latest Zoom updates, make yourselves familiar with the “raise hand” function at the bottom of the screen. I will remind members and witnesses to please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. If you're on the video conference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself. When you are done speaking, your microphone should be on mute.

Speak slowly and clearly for the sake of our interpreters so that everybody can get a good translation and we don't put too much strain on our interpreters. I remind you that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair. With regard to a speaking list, Mr. Clerk and I will do our best to maintain that consolidated order of speaking for all members.

At this time I would like to welcome our witnesses. From the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, we have Lisa Foss, executive director. From the Department of Justice, we have Carole Morency, director general and senior general counsel, criminal law policy section, policy sector. We also have Michael Ellison, counsel, criminal law policy section, policy sector. From the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, we have Zane Hansen, president and chief executive officer. Welcome to all of you. You will each have five minutes to make your introductory remarks and

then we'll go in to our rounds of questions. We'll start with the Department of Agriculture.

Ms. Floss, you have five minutes. Go ahead.

Ms. Lisa Foss (Executive Director, Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency, Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Thanks very much.

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'm the executive director of the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency, CPMA. Let me start by explaining a little bit about the CPMA.

The CPMA is a special operating agency situated within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada that regulates and supervises parimutuel betting on horse races. The legislative authority was established in the 1920s.

The mandate of the CPMA is to ensure that parimutuel betting on horse racing is conducted in a way that is fair to the betting public.

You might not be familiar with the term “parimutuel”. Very simply, it's a form of betting that is pool-based, where the bettors are competing with each other for a portion of the pool. The winners divide the total amount of the bet—that is to say, the pool—in proportion to their bets, less a predetermined percentage for the management of the pools by the racetrack operators, applicable provincial taxes and the CPMA's federal levy.

The CPMA's funding model is set up under the Revolving Funds Act, which means it does not receive any government funding. Rather, its revenue is generated through a 0.8% levy applied against each dollar bet in Canada on horse racing.

The total amount bet in Canada on horse racing in fiscal 2019 was \$1.2 billion, which generated an annual revenue of just over \$9 million for the CPMA. The sector and the CPMA rely on the revenues earned from this betting to fund their operations. Over the last decade or so, these funds, the total amount bet in Canada, have been declining steadily. In the last 20 years, they have dropped by about 27%.

With the funds generated through its levy, the CPMA currently monitors parimutuel betting at 31 racetracks and 145 betting theatres. Betting theatres might be something that you're familiar with at your favourite sports bar. The CPMA has a staff of 31. I'm going to very quickly highlight the three buckets of things that we do.

First, we provide regulatory approval and oversight for betting on parimutuel horse races. This includes, for example, ensuring accurate calculations of the amounts retained by the racetrack operators and the amounts paid out to the winners. We investigate complaints, and we audit systems.

Second, we issue betting permits and licences to Canadian racetracks and their associated betting theatres.

Third, we deliver the equine drug control, or anti-doping, program to deter the unauthorized administration of drugs and medications to racehorses. This national program ensures consistency and helps maintain the integrity of the sport. In an average year, the CPMA tests approximately 25,000 samples of blood or urine. Where a drug violation is found, a certificate of positive analysis is issued by the CPMA. It is up to the province to adjudicate and impose penalties on the violation. For example, that could be a fine or a suspension.

While the CPMA is focused on betting and equine anti-doping, it's the provincial governments that regulate the sport itself. For example, it is the provinces that assign the race dates; officiate the races, with judges and stewards; and license the racetracks, owners, trainers and jockeys.

Now, very quickly, I would like to address the technical elements of Bill C-218 as they relate to horse racing.

Bill C-218 is silent on horse racing, which means that if Bill C-218 proceeds as currently drafted, it could be interpreted as permitting the provinces and territories to conduct and manage all forms of betting on horse racing, including parimutuel betting, which is an area that is currently regulated by the federal government through the CPMA.

If the provinces and territories were to offer and regulate betting on horse racing, it could take customers away from the racetrack operators, who currently are the only entities issued betting permits by the CPMA. This would put further pressure on the horse racing industry and the revenues base of the CPMA.

That's it. I think that's my five minutes.

I'd be very happy to answer your questions related to regulating parimutuel betting on horse racing.

Thank you.

• (1105)

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

We will now go to the Department of Justice, with Carole Morency and Michael Ellison.

You have five minutes. Go ahead.

Mr. Michael Ellison (Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section, Policy Sector, Department of Justice): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your invitation to appear in relation to Bill C-218, an act to amend the Criminal Code, sports betting. I'm pleased to appear before the committee in my capacity as counsel within the criminal law policy section of the Department of Justice.

Today I'm joined, as noted, by my colleague Carole Morency, who is senior general counsel and director general of the criminal law policy section.

I'd like to take this opportunity to offer some brief comments on Bill C-218 and the structure of the gaming and betting provisions of the Criminal Code and to discuss the differences between Bill C-218 and Bill C-13.

Bill C-218 proposes to decriminalize single-event sports betting by permitting provinces and territories to offer games or betting products concerning the outcome of a single sporting event, if they choose to do so, as what's called permissible lottery schemes under the Criminal Code.

Under Bill C-218, decriminalization would be achieved by repealing a single paragraph within the Criminal Code that currently excludes single-event sports betting from the definition of what is a provincial or territorial lottery scheme. This paragraph, along with the rest of the gaming and betting provisions, is located in part VII of the Criminal Code. The general structure of these provisions can be broken down in the following manner.

First, all gaming and betting activities are prohibited by default in Canadian law. From this general prohibition on gaming and betting, we find two carve-outs or exceptions, if you want to call them that, for legal gaming and betting.

The first carve-out or exception is the federal system of parimutuel betting on horse racing that my colleague from the CPMA just described. While many aspects of the horse racing industry are indeed regulated by the provinces and the territories, the actual parimutuel system of betting is regulated by the CPMA. As was just noted, it's a special operating agency within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Now, the second carve-out from the general prohibition on gaming and betting is in the form of the provincial and territorial lottery schemes. This carve-out has been in place since 1969-70; it permits provinces and territories to offer a very broad range of games that involve elements of chance or betting products.

We refer in the Criminal Code to provinces and territories "conducting and managing" these lottery schemes, and in fact this is very similar to regulating these lottery schemes. However, in limited circumstances the provinces and territories may also license other entities to operate lottery schemes. Typically we see this in the form of charitable lotteries. These charitable lotteries would be licensed by the provinces and territories.

This brings us back to Bill C-218. Subsection 207 (4) of the Criminal Code defines permissible lottery schemes. We find there the definition of what a "lottery scheme" is. So long as provincial and territorial authorities regulate gaming products within this definition, they are legal activities.

While the definition is broad, Parliament has maintained certain exclusions to this definition, and these exclusions in effect make specific activities once again subject to the general prohibition and therefore illegal.

The exclusion from the definition of a permissible lottery scheme that is the subject of Bill C-218 is found in paragraph 207 (4)(b) of the Criminal Code. This paragraph prohibits the provinces and territories from offering betting products on single-event sporting events. Repealing this paragraph would therefore leave the provinces and territories unrestricted in their ability to offer gaming and betting products that they consider appropriate for races, fights, single-sport events or athletic contests.

Bill C-13, in contrast, retains some of the language found in this paragraph and introduces the term "horse race". The effect is that Bill C-13, unlike Bill C-218, would retain the federal role of regulating systems of betting on horse racing across the country. Presently, in this paragraph, the terms "race" and "single-sport events" operate to prohibit provincial and territorial activity in this field.

Those are my comments, and I think my five minutes have just run out.

I'd like to thank you again, Madam Chair and everybody, for the invitation to my colleague and me.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you. We really appreciate this.

We'll now go to the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, with Zane Hansen, for five minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Zane Hansen (President and Chief Executive Officer, Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority): Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning to members of the committee. It's a pleasure to be speaking to you today on the topic of single-event sports wagering.

My name is Zane Hansen and I am the president and CEO of the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, SIGA for short.

I will quickly give you some background on our company. SIGA is a casino operator situated in Saskatchewan. We are owned by the 74 first nations in our province. About 25 years ago, our first nations collectively reached an agreement with the province to guide the development of casinos in Saskatchewan.

Our purpose for getting into the casino business is not unlike other jurisdictions. We view the industry as a means to create employment, support economic development and raise revenues for our communities.

Since the early 1990s, the industry certainly has been quite resilient and has delivered very well on expected benefits. From our perspective at SIGA, we've done very well, developing seven regional casino markets. We've created employment through that for over 1,800 individuals, of whom 65% or more are of first nations origin.

Supporting on-reserve economic development was key as well. That helps build local infrastructure and tax bases for our first nations communities. As a non-profit, we annually return millions of dollars to our first nations communities, the provincial government and our regional charity foundations. In the context of first nations development, these benefits have been of critical importance.

As we all know, we're not in normal times. COVID-19 brought our sector to an abrupt halt almost a year ago. Like most casinos across Canada now, our properties are currently closed. At this point, our company faces mounting losses and we have now placed about 93% of our employees on various forms of leave.

I want to say we're grateful for the wage subsidy program implemented by the federal government. That has been key to our survival through this year. While the impacts are painful, we also understand the difficult measures that need to be taken to address this and to counter the virus. We all must find our way through this very difficult situation.

One tool that will help us recover is single-event wagering. This is an important piece of legislation that will really assist operators across the country.

I would say the gaming industry is no different from other sectors of the economy where advances in technology and evolving customer preferences drive continuous change. Single-event sports wagering is the perfect example of that. Customers prefer it because it is a more dynamic form of wagering and it primarily takes place under relatively newer channels to deliver gaming, which are online and mobile.

You will hear of many positions to support single-event wagering. I'll just share a few from our view as an operator.

First, we simply want the opportunity to compete and offer a product that our customers like. We see, of course, the unregulated "grey" market conducting business in our province, taking a lot of money out and not returning benefits to our stakeholders. You will see, across the country, that gaming operators are also heavily invested in the industry. Single-event wagering will bring further investment as companies look for ways to enhance the gaming entertainment experience based on sport.

To give you an example of that, single-event wagering is a perfect opportunity to take a multi-channel view with our customers. We can enhance and modify the food and beverage formats within our casinos, and we can complement that with the other channel of online or mobile, where people can bet that way. This will not only diversify our revenue base, it will also drive reinvestment and employment back into our casinos, once legislated.

It also protects the interests of our customers. As regulated operators, we make sure our customers are well informed on the games we provide and the integrity of the game is preserved. As legal operators, we are held to high standards of accountability in areas such as industry regulation, responsible gaming and processing of financial transactions. I think it would improve that whole area.

Those are just a few of the reasons we see single-event wagering as such an important part of our future.

As a casino operator and on behalf of SIGA and our stakeholders here in Saskatchewan, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Hansen. I appreciate you for staying within the five minutes for your testimony.

We will now go into our first round of questions, starting with Mr. Waugh for six minutes. Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank all three groups that have come to the justice committee here this morning.

I think I'll start with Ms. Foss.

What is the likelihood of provinces' permitting wagering on horse racing outside of the parimutuel system we have today?

Ms. Lisa Foss: That's a good question.

If we look at what's happening in other jurisdictions around the world, there is interest in providing fixed-odds betting on horse racing. I don't have a good handle on which provinces would be interested in offering that, but I do know that it's been successful in other jurisdictions. I don't know if you're calling witnesses from the provinces to the table, but I think there would be an interest in that.

Of course, the important thing to recognize is that it's expensive to operate a racetrack, and the infrastructure around putting that together is significant. If the provinces were to offer fixed-odds betting on horse racing without some sort of compensation for that infrastructure that's involved in putting that race together, that's the difficult thing to get your mind around.

• (1120)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: The offshore sites now, as you know, are offering racing in Canada, and we're getting nothing from that. Could you comment on that on behalf of the CPMA?

Ms. Lisa Foss: I guess I have a couple of things here.

I want to make it clear that I'm a public servant and that I'm a regulator. What would be interesting would be to hear directly from the horse racing industry and seek its views in terms of the dynamics.

One of the elements here to be mindful of is that the business model for the horse racing sector is founded on gambling dollars. Unlike other sports, the whole business model is in tune with the gambling dollars that are coming in. In terms of the CPMA, our revenue base is based on total dollars bet in Canada on horse rac-

ing. That's dollars that Canadians are betting on Canadian races and also dollars that Canadians are betting on foreign races. Our 0.8% levy is based on that dollar. However, the CPMA does not get any money when you have an American gambling in New York on a Canadian product.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: That would be Woodbine. It is the biggest in the country.

Ms. Lisa Foss: Ontario.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Yes, Ontario; you're right.

Ms. Lisa Foss: Ontario represents about 70% of the total dollars bet in Canada.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Yes, I knew that. Thank you, though, for confirming that.

Mr. Hansen, thank you for coming to committee today.

So much has been said about the casinos in Niagara Falls, along with Windsor. I brought you to committee—and you accepted—because of the indigenous aspect. This bill, Bill C-218, has a broad effect across the country. You had a very good statement today. You employ up to 1,800 people or more, and 65% of those are indigenous. This is the group that I feel in our province needs hope and opportunities. I think this bill's going forward gives your company and the people of Saskatchewan an opportunity for hope and employment because coming out of COVID is going to be, as you said, extremely difficult.

Could you comment on that?

Mr. Zane Hansen: Certainly, this has been an impact unlike anything we've ever seen in our business. Definitely, having single-event wagering as an approved form of gambling to incorporate into our business model will really assist us in rebuilding and going forward. It's going to be a whole new world getting our customers back into our building and feeling safe and comfortable. That is always paramount for us. Adding this into our product mix, and reinvesting and integrating it with our bricks and mortar properties, will be a very important piece. It helps diversify the customer base, and it helps diversify the revenue base. That will help us get our business stronger and create more opportunity for people.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: How much funding are the Province of Saskatchewan and SIGA losing, do you think, with single-game betting now on offshore sites, unregulated sites? Give me a rough estimate. I have no idea, but you're in the business, so what does it mean?

Mr. Zane Hansen: What we've seen in other jurisdictions... There are studies out now. At the high end, say, in the U.K. with regard to single-event wagering, a common way to gauge broad macro-type revenues is spend per adult annually. In the U.K., they are hitting in the neighbourhood of \$75 per adult every year. More recently, in New Jersey, with legalization there, they're in the neighbourhood of \$50 per adult. I will say that, because sports exist primarily through the online mobile channels, the impact of COVID has really grown that. You really take your adults—in Saskatchewan, we have about 890,000—and look at \$50 to \$75 as a potential global amount, and not all of that is new. However, \$20 to \$30 per adult is what we're exactly losing out on right now.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: That is substantial on reserves and in your communities, plus the provincial government gives a lot of money back in culture, sports and recreation, which we're losing out on today because of this unregulated market.

• (1125)

The Chair: That concludes your time, Mr. Waugh.

Thank you very much, Mr. Hansen.

We'll now go to our second questioner, Ms. Élisabeth Brière. You have six minutes. Go ahead.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Thank you, Madame Chair.

Thank you to all our witnesses today.

My first question is for Carole Morency.

[Translation]

In the interest of all parliamentarians, including mine, could you first explain to us the difference between parimutuel betting and single-event sports betting, which has fixed odds?

Ms. Carole Morency (Director General and Senior General Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section, Policy Sector, Department of Justice): Thank you for your question.

I will ask my colleague Michael Ellison to answer your question.

[English]

Mr. Michael Ellison: As Ms. Foss described, parimutuel betting is a form of pool betting. While I would defer to her on the specifics of the exact operation of parimutuel betting, it is essentially a form of pool betting. All interested bettors on the outcome of a horse race pool their bets together. A levy is taken out of that pool for the operation of the CPMA and to help pay for the horse industry in general, including the race operators. The remaining money, depending on the outcome of the race and which horse was bet on, is then divided up between them. That is the pool-based system.

The difference between that and single-event sports betting is that...essentially there is no difference. Single-event sports betting is legal in Canada in one form, and that is parimutuel betting, because ultimately this parimutuel betting system that's in place, which is regulated by the CPMA, is a form of betting on the outcome of a single sporting event.

While Bill C-218 seeks to decriminalize single-event sports betting, it does so when we're talking about provincial and territorial

powers. The bill would propose to decriminalize single-event sports betting, including betting products and games of chance, however they are set up by the provinces and territories within their structure of lottery schemes.

To quickly sum up, parimutuel betting—as it's constructed under the CPMA currently—is one form of single-event sports betting, but there are no other legal forms of single-event sports betting today.

[Translation]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Why was single-event sports betting not allowed in the past? What has changed for us to be moving forward today?

[English]

Mr. Michael Ellison: This section of the Criminal Code stems originally from old English law. Back at the time of Confederation, there was a general prohibition on these types of gaming and betting activities. That was reflected in our first Criminal Code at the end of the 1800s as well, so that general prohibition has always existed since the beginning of Canada, back at Confederation. Popular theories as to why it existed would suggest that there were just general concerns about morality and vice in communities and the morality of gambling.

In terms of the Criminal Code, over the past 150 years, but in particular over the past 100 years, we have seen a slow and incremental decriminalization of various betting products as Parliament has considered it appropriate. For example, in and around the Great War we saw the legalization or the decriminalization of betting on horse racing. It had been occurring in any event, but that was formally recognized and then the legislative authority was established in the 1920s, as Ms. Foss pointed out.

Again, we saw a major shift in 1969 and 1970, with the decriminalization of lotteries. That was a decision that Parliament at the time, taking into account a number of factors, considered appropriate.

Now, the latest large discussion over the past decade has been over single-event sports betting. There are a number of important influences that the committee should and will be considering and has considered before with private members' bills in the past: everything from potential match fixing to morality and other considerations that are completely valid under our consideration of what is criminal law in Canada.

I hope that answers your question.

• (1130)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Yes, thank you.

[Translation]

Do you think it is legitimate to think this bill has a real chance of reducing the number of illegal sports bets?

[English]

Mr. Michael Ellison: I think, for the department, my colleague and I can say that it is likely, depending on how the provinces and territories set up their regulated spaces for single-event sports betting, that some of that activity that is occurring today would be brought into the regulated sphere. It is highly contingent on what the provinces and territories do to set up their regulated spaces under lottery schemes, and we certainly can't put a number on the amount or volume of betting that would come into a legal system. Doing that would be dependent on our colleagues in the provinces and territories who have that expertise in setting up those systems.

The Chair: Thanks very much.

We'll now go to Mr. Fortin.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin, do you want to begin?

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Ellison, I would like to know what you think about the current legal status of gambling on first nations reserve lands. We know gambling is taking place there.

Also, if passed, what impact would Bill C-218 have on that gambling?

[English]

Mr. Michael Ellison: Again, the comments that I can offer here are to describe, essentially, very quickly, the powers that are authorized under the Criminal Code. Under Canadian law, we have only the two carve-outs for legal betting. You can bet under the parimutuel system on horse racing or you can bet under an established provincial or territorial lottery scheme.

Under those lottery scheme powers, provinces will directly conduct and manage certain schemes like OLG in Ontario and Loto-Québec. Those are the established ones that everybody knows about. In addition to that, provinces can license entities, whether they be charities—among the most popular—or, as we've seen in the last 20 years, agreements can be—

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Apologies, I don't mean to interrupt, but we don't have much time.

If I understand correctly, you are saying that gambling is not currently taking place on first nations lands. So the impact of Bill C-218 would be the same on first nations lands and among civil society in general. Is that right?

[English]

Mr. Michael Ellison: To get to the point as quickly as possible, because I know we don't have a lot of time, there are agreements in place between provinces and territories and indigenous peoples. Whether it's an indigenous nation within the province or a community or an organization, those agreements can involve indigenous peoples and they can have a direct effect on them. For example, the Province of Saskatchewan and SIGA have a very comprehensive agreement in place that deals with revenue sharing and whatnot. Bill C-218 can have an impact on indigenous peoples by affecting

those agreements, and the ability of provinces and territories to offer additional products would also allow indigenous operators to offer additional products as well if there was an agreement in place between them and the province or the territory.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: I have a second question, which is for Mr. Hansen.

To your knowledge, what programs have been implemented on first nations reserves to try to overcome gambling addiction issues?

[English]

Mr. Zane Hansen: Thank you, Member Fortin. Yes, we're very mainstream with our responsible gaming programs. You can look at our casinos as an example. All of our properties are members of the RG check program. We've reached national accreditation on responsible gaming standards. We are also a member of the GameSense programming that originated out of British Columbia with the lottery corporation there.

You will see in our entity that there's a 100% requirement for employee training on responsible gaming. We have very thorough programming going forward. As we look at sports wagering in the online space primarily, we'll take the fundamentals of that program and make sure those are relayed into our customer base that comes in through sports wagering. The advantage you have with sports wagering in an online context is that all of your players and customers are registered. You can continuously monitor and even put in more controls for responsible gaming that way.

Beyond that, all of the operations we conduct are highly regulated by our regulators here in the province. As you legislate and legalize single-event sports wagering, the standards rise on all fronts.

• (1135)

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Okay.

In your opinion, Mr. Hansen, is pathological gambling currently leading to domestic violence issues on reserves? What is your assessment of this situation? Could you tell me about the connection between pathological gambling and domestic violence issues?

[English]

Mr. Zane Hansen: I think there you'd be referring to probably any form of addiction and what that can cause in other environments. Definitely that is not something we want to see. We take a long-term view of the industry. We want our players to be well informed and not to be participating in ways that cause them harm or their behaviour—

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Okay.

So you have no statistics on the impact of pathological gambling problems on domestic violence. Do you know if any such statistics exist?

[English]

The Chair: Be very brief, Mr. Hansen.

Mr. Zane Hansen: Yes.

There is considerable data. You'll have speakers coming up who can speak to the small percentage of society with addiction concerns that way. As for taking it beyond that, in terms of what else it may cause, I would not be familiar with any data on that front.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Thank you, Mr. Hansen.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Monsieur Fortin.

We'll go to Mr. Masse for six minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Ms. Foss, maybe I can start with you. I just want to make sure I have this correct. Is that 0.8% levy legislated or regulated?

Ms. Lisa Foss: Michael can help me out with that one, but that's a legislated number and it can move. In the Criminal Code, it can allow us to go up to 1%. If we were to make a change from 0.8% up to 1%, we could do that through a regulatory change.

Mr. Brian Masse: Has that been changed in the past at all? I was listening to your numbers and wondering just how sustainable the status quo is for the department you run and the industry using it. That's what I'm concerned about. You mentioned it was created in the 1920s, which makes you probably part of the more modern part of this bill. How sustainable is it?

Ms. Lisa Foss: That is a great question. It's a question that keeps me up at night as well. We've been on a declining basis. We are reaching a tipping point, I would say, in terms of our funding model. We've done a number of cost-cutting exercises over the last number of years. The objective of the CPMA is to run a zero balance, if you will, where expenses equal revenues each year. We've been fairly successful at doing that in the last number of years, but it's becoming increasingly difficult.

About 65% of the budget for the CPMA is to deliver the equine drug control program, the anti-doping program. Science is expensive. Testing is expensive. Keeping on top of the science is tough. We are in a situation where there's tremendous pressure, absolutely.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you.

Maybe I can move to you, Mr. Ellison, with regard to that. You distinguished the difference between Bill C-13 and Bill C-218. Can you talk a little bit about that change there? I had argued to keep both bills going. The Speaker ruled that they're the same.

What's your reflection on that? Could you provide your professional opinion on that?

• (1140)

Mr. Michael Ellison: I apologize; I just dropped out. Could the question be repeated?

Mr. Brian Masse: Yes. I hope, Madam Chair, I don't lose my time. I'll be really quick to try to catch up.

Just with regards to C-13 and C-218, the Speaker ruled that they're the same. I was just questioning Ms. Foss with regards to the sustainability of her program. This is the germane part between the two. Could you provide your professional commentary on the differences of the bills, and on if we amended it, and it still doesn't solve our problem?

Mr. Michael Ellison: The main difference is that, of course, Bill C-218 has a complete repeal of the paragraph. Bill C-13 would maintain most of the language. It would remove all of the references, other than that we would insert a reference essentially under that bill to horse racing. It completely excludes any system of betting on horse races from provincial and territorial authority. That would very clearly maintain the long-standing role of the CPMA, while opening up all other forms of single-event sports betting or betting at athletic contests or fights—anything of that nature—for the PTs. They could regulate any of those products as they see fit.

I hope that answers your question—

Mr. Brian Masse: It does. The thing is, it doesn't solve Ms. Foss's problem with their situation in terms of the structural discrepancies between continuing to have the drug tests and the [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] costs incurred in that, and the percentages that she can raise back to 1% from 0.8%. It doesn't change that, though.

Mr. Michael Ellison: No, it does not change that.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you.

I'll move to Mr. Hansen, please. You brought up a really good point that I don't think gets a lot of attention. You also help your clients with processing financial transactions.

I know organized crime does it in a different way for illegal sports betting. Maybe you can talk about the protections you provide for your consumers by that measure, because I don't think that's discussed enough as regards the abuse and the violence that goes on with the underground black market economy versus that of a regulator that has accountability. Also, could you highlight a little bit about your process for financial transaction?

Mr. Zane Hansen: As casino operators, we follow and operate under the guidelines set out through FINTRAC, which basically ensure that there are high standards placed around financial transactions.

We have to fill out forms for any transaction over certain dollar thresholds, and people have to verify their source of funds when they're coming to partake on our gaming floors when they bet at certain levels. By legislating single events, you can then apply those same standards to single-event wagering that takes place. I think that would vastly improve that area as well.

Mr. Brian Masse: That's a key point because obviously the Hells Angels and others don't use FINTRAC, whereas you can actually track the financial movement of larger sums of money. Is that correct?

Mr. Zane Hansen: Yes. With single-event wagering, you're primarily in an online and mobile context. Your players all have to be registered with you. Then if they have dollar-volume activities in their accounts that exceed certain thresholds, there's further due diligence and information that has to be provided on their source of income and source of funds. It's a much more sound environment.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you.

The Chair: We'll now go into our second round of questions for five minutes, starting with Madam Findlay. Please go ahead.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you to all of you for being here today. We very much appreciate it.

I only have five minutes, so we'll get into it quickly.

This would be for the justice department. Can you comment on the prevalence of criminal activities related to single-game betting on the black market? As part of that, is there any data out of the U.S. you can reference where single-game sports betting has been legalized?

I don't know who wants to go for that.

• (1145)

Mr. Michael Ellison: First of all, on the link to organized crime, I think the best resource for the committee is the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada. They put out a public report on organized crime in Canada. In particular, the 2019 public report is just accessible off their website. It draws the link specifically between unregulated gambling activities and organized crime, in particular with motorcycle outlaw groups and other forms of organized crime.

The problem, of course, is that because it's a grey or a black market, it's incredibly difficult to get data on potential dollars flowing or potential betting activity.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Would you suggest we look for data from the U.S. where it has been legalized? It might be of benefit to us.

Mr. Michael Ellison: Yes, of course. I think one of the best resources is the State of New Jersey. In fact, committee members will find that there are reports I believe monthly from the Office of the Attorney General in New Jersey. Since decriminalization in 2018, I believe, that state was at the forefront of litigation, so as soon as there was an opportunity to legalize, they did.

They release monthly reports outlining the various revenues coming into the state through betting, including single-event sports

betting. You'll also find a number of news articles referencing those reports. There are very large amounts of money going to the State of New Jersey. It's on the forefront.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you.

First, Mr. Hansen, I'd like to thank you for your GameSense responsible gambling program. I understand that it provides education and resources with respect to problem gambling. It has been said one of the benefits of legalizing single-event sports betting is that there would be an ability for more revenues for greater protections for people who may be suffering from or susceptible to gambling addictions.

I wonder if you would consider imposing daily limits to reduce the risk of problem gambling.

Mr. Zane Hansen: Thank you, Member Findlay.

Certainly it's something that we can entertain. We often work closely with our provincial counterparts and regulators on those matters. The online nature of single-event betting that I mentioned earlier gives you the opportunity to put a number of controls in place that way: for time of play and for the amount that could be wagered in any given time period as well. Definitely, those options are there for us.

For us, we always take a long-term view. We have to live in our markets over the long term, so protecting player interests and having a long-term customer base is very important for us.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you.

According to the website bet365, one of the most popular offshore gambling apps, it allows users to deposit up to \$50,000 to their account instantly, using a credit card. Would you place limits on credit card sports gambling or transaction amounts?

Mr. Zane Hansen: I would definitely anticipate as we start to design the program that we would do that. We have bet limits on pretty much every form of gaming we provide, and for every form of gaming we provide, we fully inform the customers on the odds and the nature of the game they're playing. The online activity and sports betting would be no different.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Thank you.

I see that there's not enough time to ask another question. Thanks to all of you for being here. We really do appreciate it.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam Findlay.

We'll now go to Mr. Maloney for five minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to all of our witnesses.

For me at least, this is a bit like watching an online gambling seminar. I'm learning a lot through this discussion, as I did from our first witness on Tuesday, who, I should add, did a great presentation too.

Thank you to Mr. Ellison for his earlier explanation, because I have to admit that I was very confused in trying to distinguish between single-event betting and parimutuel betting. I'm not a big gambler, but in the few times that I've been out to the racetrack, I bet on one race at a time and pick a horse to win, place or show. That much I'm able to figure out on my own.

Am I correct in understanding that when I do that it's a form of parimutuel betting?

• (1150)

Mr. Michael Ellison: Yes, to keep it relatively simple, the only form of legalized betting on horse racing currently in Canada is through the parimutuel system. There's a bit of confusion—rightfully so—because the term “parimutuel” is very expansive, and it could encompass a lot of different forms of betting. At the end of the day, it's pool based, and that is what you would do if you're going to the racetrack today to bet. You're betting under the CPMA regime, and it is single-event sports betting—or one form of it.

Mr. James Maloney: I'm confused, then, in how allowing single-event sports betting on hockey games, football games, etc., impacts on the horse racing industry.

Mr. Michael Ellison: There are two potential impacts, I suppose.

One is that allowing single-event sports betting on hockey games, let's say, could still attract the betting audience away from horse racing. That is one possibility. It might be a low possibility, but it is one to consider.

The second is that it doesn't have perhaps a large impact. The other impact is that provinces and territories, by legalizing single-event sports betting in the manner that this bill and Bill C-13 propose—by targeting this paragraph of the Criminal Code—would let provinces and territories set up schemes for any kind of sporting event. That would also include horse racing. If a province then took action after legalization, they could set up, for example, fixed-odds betting on horse racing, or their own parimutuel system on horse racing, or any other form of betting that they can dream of, really, and that would directly compete with the system that the CPMA runs.

I'd be happy to elaborate.

Mr. James Maloney: Yes, you're going to have to, because when I go to Woodbine and I bet on horse X to win a race, isn't that single-event betting with fixed odds?

My odds aren't locked in when I place that bet. Is that the distinction?

Mr. Michael Ellison: Exactly. When you go to Woodbine, it is single-event sports betting, because it's the outcome of a single race, and it's parimutuel betting, which is pool based, and the odds that you see are not fixed. Those odds will change up until the point that the race starts. You can place your bet five minutes before the race starts and then the odds will change after you've placed your bet. Once the race starts, it's essentially locked down.

I defer to Ms. Foss if I've missed any of the details there, but that's my understanding of the difference.

Mr. James Maloney: I'd like to hear from her too.

Your point is, then, if I go and place a bet and everybody in the world thinks I know what I'm doing and they all chase my bet, the odds are going to go down, whereas in single-event sports betting, in terms of the odds, you're locked in. That's the fear for the horse racing industry, or am I misunderstanding?

Ms. Lisa Foss: No. If I may, single-event sports betting is betting on the outcome of a single event. That includes both fixed odds and parimutuel regimes.

Right now in Canada, we only have parimutuel. In other places in the world, such as Australia, they have both. On horse racing, they have parimutuel betting and also fixed-odds betting. Under fixed odds in horse racing, which is not legal in Canada, it's when the bettor puts down their money and there are odds established. They're betting on the outcome of that race and they know what their payout is going to be because it's locked in. If it's two-to-one, then you get two to one if your horse wins.

Mr. James Maloney: Then it's fixed-odds versus variable floating odds. Really, that's what it is.

Ms. Lisa Foss: Yes, and the odds are your payout. It's not the odds of the horse winning.

Mr. James Maloney: Yes.

Ms. Lisa Foss: Does that help?

Mr. James Maloney: From my limited understanding, I got that part.

My last point is something that Ms. Findlay mentioned briefly. The objective here, in part, is to allow single-event sports betting because it takes the bad guys out of the industry, but I assume that unless we have an unlimited betting amount, it's not going to completely eliminate them. They'll still take the single big bets.

The Chair: We'll go to you very briefly for an answer.

Mr. Michael Ellison: I suppose I can answer that question.

Under either of the bills that are before the House, Bill C-218 or Bill C-13, we don't have a way to say that all illegal betting would be brought into a legal market.

Mr. James Maloney: All right. Thanks very much.

The Chair: Thanks very much.

We'll now go to Monsieur Fortin for two and a half minutes. Go ahead, sir.

• (1155)

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Okay. I have two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

It will go by quickly.

As my colleague said concerning sports betting, the more I hear about it, the more I realize that I don't understand a thing, but that's another story.

Mr. Ellison, in your opinion, if Bill C-218 was passed as is, would the Criminal Code or the Canadian legislation make it possible to properly control problems that are potentially related to the fixing of single-event sports?

If not, what could we do to improve the legislation?

[English]

Mr. Michael Ellison: Currently, the Criminal Code has two offences that are charged in these circumstances for match-fixing that is identified. Those offences typically are cheating at play, which is a potential one, but more commonly, fraud, which is under subsection 380(1) of the Criminal Code.

Those offences have been successfully prosecuted, including recently a case that went to the Supreme Court, in 2015: the Queen v. Riesberry. Therefore, we have offences in the Criminal Code that can combat this activity. Of course, there are other issues that have to do with detection.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Is that enough?

Could we improve that?

[English]

Mr. Michael Ellison: At this time, my comment would be that the Supreme Court has ruled that these offences are applicable, but I would say that the committee could look to other jurisdictions and also measures at the UN and other international organizations where there are calls for specific offences.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Are you sure that, if Bill C-218 was passed, we could avoid the fixing of single-event sports in Canada?

[English]

Mr. Michael Ellison: I think it would be fair to say that match-fixing already occurs and it would still occur after, and that provinces and territories and the prosecution services and investigation services would have to focus on learning more about match-fixing and preventing it. As with all crime, it would be impossible to completely eliminate it.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: So that's what should be improved if we want to prevent the fixing of single-event sports. We should improve the Criminal Code.

[English]

The Chair: You have five seconds.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Chair, I apologize once again, but—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin:—it is difficult for the witness to answer in a reasonable amount of time when interpretation is being provided. The interpreters are doing a good job, but I think we must give the witnesses some time to answer. It's not easy, and you know that as

well as I do. When my anglophone colleagues engage with franco-phone witnesses, they have the same problem. Unfortunately, most witnesses are anglophones.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you for that intervention, Monsieur Fortin. We'll definitely take it under advisement.

We'll go now to Mr. Masse for two and a half minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Going back to Mr. Ellison very quickly, generally speaking, when we move things from the black market to a regulated market, there is a reduction in crime and criminal activity.

Is that not a fair statement with regard to when we've moved to regulatory practices in these matters?

Mr. Michael Ellison: I would say that we have seen it in recent examples with the Criminal Code. There are certainly arguments to be made, and data is still being generated in those examples. I think it's generally a fair statement to say that people are going to be attracted to a system that is regulated by the provincial and territorial governments.

Most importantly, I think, on this point, with the provinces and territories, it's not just about regulation and setting standards; it's also about integrating police forces as well, and monitoring betting activity. That can be done within a regulated atmosphere, and that will have a good impact.

Mr. Brian Masse: It will also divert resources—if we want to—to taxation models to support those objectives. As well, it will take money sources away from those organized elements that currently receive those funds.

Mr. Michael Ellison: It's fair to say, as a general statement, that the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada makes that link. Establishing a system and moving some of that betting activity will cut funding to organized crime to some extent. As we see with the CP-MA now, integrated investigators at the PT level will assist in crime detection.

• (1200)

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you.

Moving very quickly to Mr. Hansen—I only have about 45 seconds—do you think your customers who you're coming into a relationship with are also using these online services that are in the grey market or black market area right now? I know that they are in my area.

Are they doing that with your customer base as well right now?

Mr. Zane Hansen: The potential is definitely there. What we understand from other jurisdictions is that the sports betting customer will primarily be a new customer, beyond the reach of what casino customers are now.

Generally, if people have a legal option versus an illegal option, they will gravitate towards the legal. We see the advent of, say, provincial online organizations such as B.C., with their offering, and they now have majority market share. Your customers do gravitate toward legal offerings.

By legislating something, then you can regulate it. The industry can put their regulations around it, and it will vastly improve the integrity of the product being offered.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thanks very much.

At this time, I'll thank our witnesses and our committee today.

[Translation]

I thank you for your dedication and your participation.

[English]

We will suspend as we let in our next witnesses.

• (1200) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1205)

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, I will call the meeting back to order.

Before we get started, I'll remind our members, and also let our witnesses know, that when you are speaking, please wait until you're recognized. Please unmute yourself before speaking, and then when you are not speaking, please be on mute.

Speak slowly and clearly for interpretation purposes, as we want to make sure that everybody understands. For the interpretation, select the language you would like to listen to. You can speak in any language that you so choose.

At this time, I'd like to welcome our witnesses. From the Canadian Gaming Association, we have Paul Burns who is the president and chief executive officer. From the Responsible Gambling Council, we have Shelley White, chief executive officer.

It's so wonderful to see you again, Shelley. We also have Tracy Parker, director, standards and accreditation.

From Unifor, we have Jerry Dias, national president; and Marc Hollin, who is the national representative.

You will each have five minutes to speak. I have a one minute card and a thirty second card, which I will be using as I count your time.

We'll start with the Canadian Gaming Association.

Mr. Burns, you have five minutes. Please go ahead.

Mr. Paul Burns (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Gaming Association): Thank you.

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I want to thank the members of Parliament for your leadership over the past year. During these very difficult times, your efforts to support individuals and businesses are welcome and are to be commended.

The Canadian Gaming Association is a national trade association representing gaming facility operators, manufacturers of gaming technology and equipment, and a wide array of suppliers of goods and services to Canada's gaming industry.

With over \$17 billion in annual revenue, Canada's gaming industry is present in every region of the country. Just over 100 MPs have major gaming facilities in their communities. Our industry supports over 180,000 jobs across Canada, contributing almost \$19 billion in value-added GDP. We purchase over \$14.5 billion annually in goods and services, and much of that comes from the communities in which we operate.

Our industry, like so many others, has been severely impacted by the pandemic. Many of our facilities have not reopened since last March, or, when permitted to open, have done so with very limited capacity. Many of the 90,000 frontline employees have not been able to come to work this past year, creating significant and devastating impacts for families and communities.

This is one of the reasons our industry continues to pursue the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code that you are studying. As we look towards recovery, having the ability to offer single-event sports wagering when we are able to reopen safely will be of tremendous benefit to Canadian gaming operators and their employees.

While we have been closed—respecting the directives from our local public health authorities—offshore online sports books and bookmaking operations run by organized crime have continued to operate. Annually, Canadians place over \$4 billion in wagers with offshore online sports books and approximately \$10 billion through illegal bookmaking operations run by organized crime. It's time to level the playing field. It's time to give Canadian gaming operators the opportunity to offer the same product in a legal, licensed and highly regulated environment, and see the benefits flow back to our communities and to the public good.

Our industry, alongside provincial government partners, has been requesting this amendment for over a decade. As you will learn through these hearings, the amendment is supported by business and labour organizations, law enforcement professionals, professional amateur sports organizations, municipalities and responsible gaming organizations. It's time to get it done.

In 1985, the federal and provincial governments agreed that the provinces would have an exclusive right to operate and regulate gaming within their jurisdictions. Over the past 30-plus years, provincial governments have worked to create a safe, highly regulated gaming environment. We've developed and implemented world-class responsible gaming programs that allow Canadian operators to deliver high-quality gaming experiences in safe and secure environments.

It is the provinces, through their provincial gaming regulators, who will work to ensure sports wagering is delivered with the proper level of controls and oversight. This will include things like age and identity verification to ensure minors cannot participate; information and data-sharing agreements between sports organizations, sports book operators, gaming regulators and law enforcement to protect the integrity of matches and prevent match fix; prohibition on things like players, coaches and officials from wagering on sports; standards for advertising and marketing; and obviously, access to responsible gaming tools, and self-exclusion operators for players.

It is only through the regulation of this activity that we can bring it out of the shadows, where it currently operates, and into the light, where we can ensure that proper player protections are available and enforced. This is the only way that Canadian technology companies, like Toronto-based sports book operator theScore, Vancouver-based technology gaming developer FansUnite or Halifax-based sport statistics data provider Covers Media can grow their businesses. These are companies based in Canada that provide goods and services to a global customer base. They are innovators, creating high-value jobs.

If Canada continues to criminalize single-event wagering, the appetite to continue to drive innovation for companies like these may not be there. Provinces need to be allowed to give consumers more and better choice of where they're betting, and obviously, I'd like to see home-grown companies like the ones I just mentioned be able to thrive in their home markets.

In closing, the sentiment by all stakeholders is that this legislation is long overdue. Only by regulating single-sports betting can we be sure that players are protected, that funds are returned to the provinces in which they're generated and that Canadian businesses have an opportunity to grow and renew their revenue streams.

Thank you for having me.

• (1210)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Burns.

I appreciate you staying within those five minutes.

We'll now go to the Responsible Gaming Council with Shelley White, who's the chief executive officer, and Tracy Parker.

Please, go ahead. You have five minutes.

Ms. Shelley White (Chief Executive Officer, Responsible Gambling Council): Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the Standing Committee of Justice and Human Rights. Thank you for inviting the Responsible Gambling Council to share our perspective on Bill C-218.

RGC is a respected Canadian not-for-profit organization whose mission is to prevent problem gambling and reduce its impact. Canada is considered a leader in responsible gambling. We're proud to be part of this discussion on the legalization of sports betting.

Our position on gambling is neutral. Gambling is a legal activity in Canada, and as such, we exist to ensure safeguards are in place to minimize the risks associated with gambling.

For over 35 years, RGC has worked closely with regulators and operators to provide strategic guidance, research and accreditation. It works with the public to deliver education and information, so they can make informed decisions about gambling.

We are gratified by our work and how it influences a safer gambling industry. For instance, we prepared the responsible gambling Canada review for Paul Burns and the Canadian Gaming Association, which Mr. Waugh referred to on Tuesday.

For over the last few years, sports betting has grown in popularity, and with it, the body of evidence to suggest who's gambling, the issues associated with sports betting and how to support a safer sports betting industry.

According to the 2018 Canadian Community Health Survey, sports betting prevalence in Canada is 7.9%, with Alberta and Manitoba showing the highest proportion of participation.

A survey that RGC conducted in August 2020 with Ontarians asked about their participation in live, online sports betting with a bookmaker. Sixty-two per cent of males responded that they had participated. Thirty-four per cent of respondents had recently lost employment or reduced hours of employment. Thirteen per cent screened with severe anxiety. Forty-seven per cent positively screened for problem gambling. Over one in 10 intend to gamble online post-COVID-19, and 5% intend to increase their online gambling when more options are available in Ontario.

While this study was about gambling during COVID-19, we know that the impacts from the pandemic will be long-lasting. This study clearly underscores the importance of prevention safeguards as a priority as governments seek to provide broader exposure to gambling.

While gambling has existed in Canada for many years, it's important to take note of how sports betting differs from other types of gambling. Sports betting ties gambling to a favourite pastime enjoyed by millions of Canadians. This association normalizes the gambling activity. Added to this, sports betting has the added complexity of tying emotion into the gambling experience. The emotion associated with the heat-of-the-moment game play can make informed decision-making about money and time spent playing more difficult.

It is with these people in mind that we speak to you today. RGC believes that it's in the best interest of Canadians and Canadian society as a whole that Bill C-218 be passed. It is with this evidence and Canadians' best interests in mind, that RGC recommends the following to the committee.

First is that the legislation of single-event sports betting include a robust regulatory framework that requires provincial regulators and operators to prioritize and integrate consumer protection within their strategy, including adherence and accountability to the highest standard of responsible gambling.

Second is that the federal government continue to champion the prevention of addictions and preservation of individuals' mental health and well-being, in accordance with Canada's Mental Health Commission strategy. This can be achieved by prioritizing consumer safety and supporting the provincial authorities to develop comprehensive responsible gambling strategies as well as build their capacity to support individuals and their communities when they introduce legalized sports betting.

The good news is that we don't need to recreate the wheel. Most of the standards already exist and are in place in land-based gambling. We also have the benefit of lessons learned from other jurisdictions.

In closing, Madam Chair and members of the standing committee, it is RGC's neutral and independent stance that we recommend Bill C-218 be passed. This is a unique opportunity to bring together stakeholders from health, mental health, education, financial services and the policing sectors with the gambling industry to create a made-in-Canada responsible gambling culture comprised of evidence-informed regulations and leading practices. We have the opportunities to learn from other jurisdictions who've come before us and applied the highest level of safeguards.

• (1215)

This thoughtful and intentional approach will demonstrate Canada's commitment to prosperity as well as the health and well-being of Canadians and society. Thank you.

The Chair: Thanks very much, Ms. White. I appreciate that.

We'll now go to Unifor with Jerry Dias and Marc Hollin for five minutes.

Go ahead.

Mr. Jerry Dias (National President, Unifor): Good afternoon, Chair, and members of the standing committee. It is a pleasure to have been invited to speak to you here today. My name is Jerry Dias, and I am the national president of Unifor, which is Canada's largest private sector union.

Unifor represents 315,000 members across nearly all major sectors of the economy, from coast to coast, including approximately 11,000 gaming workers across the country. We have members working at the Parq Casino in Vancouver, at Manitoba lotteries, and at Caesars Windsor and Casino Rama, just to name a few.

It is on their behalf that I am speaking today when I share Unifor's support for Bill C-218, the safe and regulated sports betting act. We believe the federal government should act now to permit single-game sports betting so this gaming activity can be regulated and so our federal and provincial laws and regulations support safe and responsible gaming policy.

Unifor has been advocating for this legislation on single-game sports betting for several years, because we know first-hand that re-

sponsible gaming must take place in a professional, properly regulated and fairly taxed environment. Our members and elected leaders—leaders like Dave Cassidy, president of Local 444 in Windsor, Ontario—have been strong and vocal advocates for this legislative change. Local 444 represents 2,300 members working at Caesars Windsor.

In addition, Unifor's hospitality and gaming council, a leadership group elected by and representing 22,000 workers in the hospitality and gaming sector, has endorsed the legislation and regulation of single-game sports betting. Our workers and leaders in the sector know that regulated gaming supports our communities through good unionized jobs, provides business for the broader tourism and hospitality sector, and drives much-needed revenue streams for local, provincial and federal governments.

For many years, some of the biggest opponents to single-game sports betting were the professional sports leagues themselves. However, over time, technology has changed, regulation and enforcement have changed, and public sentiment has changed. Reflecting this shifting, evolving understanding of responsible gaming, many professional sports leagues have revised their position. In June 2020, the NBA, the National Hockey League, Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer and the CFL issued a joint statement supporting the legalization of single-game sports betting in Canada. These leagues recognize the same fundamental truth our members and local leaders do, and that is this: single-game sports betting already takes place in Canada every day, but right now it is illegal, illicit, unregulated and unmonitored. By now, you've probably heard—which you have—that sports betting in Canada is a \$14-billion-a-year business, and that only about \$500 million of that is spent on legal provincial sports betting. The other \$13.5 billion is spent through offshore organizations and illegal bookmaking operations.

In other words, in reality, Bill C-218 isn't about bringing single-game sports betting to Canada. It's about creating a legal framework that will establish a legal and regulated sports betting market in Canada, which would in turn increase consumer protections, help support responsible gaming measures, and protect the integrity of the sports themselves.

It goes without saying that revenues generated in illicit, illegal, underground black market gaming operations do nothing to contribute to good jobs for workers in Canada. This money is siphoned off into the pockets of offshore operators and organized crime. On the other hand, by creating a legal and regulated market for single-game sports betting in Canada, we could help protect thousands of good, unionized jobs in gaming locations across the country and potentially create many more. As you witnessed just last week, Bill C-218 received overwhelming support at second reading, with 303 members voting in favour. For our members working in the gaming sector, their families, and their communities, this show of support is great news.

I'd like to close by reiterating Unifor's support for Bill C-218. It's time to bring legal and regulated single-game sports betting to Canada.

Thanks very much and I look forward to your questions.

● (1220)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Dias.

We will now go into our rounds of questions for the first round of six minutes each. We'll start with Mr. Lewis.

Please go ahead, sir.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity. Thanks to each and every witness for presenting today some really fantastic testimony, as always.

My first question will be for Mr. Burns.

You spoke about 80 to 90,000 jobs within the gaming industry. As you're very well aware, Michigan and New York already have single sports betting, and Canada is losing out daily, economically and financially.

With regard to the economic side, you had mentioned about two businesses making an app of some type. Do you have any idea what economic impact this will have for Canada?

Mr. Paul Burns: There have been a great number of estimates about the size to which this market will grow. Deloitte recently released a report that said that within five years the sports gaming markets could see \$28 billion in gross wagering annually.

The impact, as previous witnesses Mr. Hansen from SIGA and Mr. Dias spoke about, on jobs and communities of being able to bring people into gaming facilities would be enhanced food and beverage offerings, expanded entertainment choices and events around that. This is where the industry sees the potential for job creation and sees those impacts, because right now, single-event sports betting is not really creating any economic benefit for Canada. It's not paying salaries. It's not going to government revenues as a lot of the gaming revenue does.

So it's tremendous being able to turn this inward. I spoke about three businesses, for example, and this is the other side. There are companies that provide goods and services and technology in the gaming and sports betting sector, the gaming sector, that can thrive with this. The reach is wide and diverse, and this is an opportunity to participate legally, to give people the legal options in

Canada. It's extremely important to see some of these benefits occur.

As the market grows, there will be significant benefits back to communities through jobs and employment in companies servicing the sports betting sector, beyond marketing partnerships, broadcasters.... There's lots of opportunity for revenue and that economic impact to be felt right across the country.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Thank you, Mr. Burns.

Mr. Dias, building off what you said, sir, about the 2,300 workers at Caesars Windsor, what will happen to Unifor gaming sector workers if this bill doesn't pass?

● (1225)

Mr. Jerry Dias: Well, first of all, it has to pass, because otherwise all that would do would be to put us at a greater competitive disadvantage with the U.S.-based casinos. Take a look at Fallsview, for example. Take a look at Caesars Windsor. We are estimating that just in those two casinos alone, single-event sports betting will require an additional 250 jobs. We're expecting that at Caesars Windsor it will generate anywhere between \$18 million and \$24 million in profits and, for Fallsview, anywhere between \$9 million and \$12 million.

So this is significant, but I think the key point—and I think we all realize this—is that Canadians are gambling. It's \$14 billion a year we're spending, and if we're not going to spend it in Canada, we're going to spend it abroad. It isn't any more complicated than that.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Thank you very much, Mr. Dias, and I will go right back to you, through our chair, of course.

When you speak about the potential 250 new jobs for Caesars Windsor, are these low-wage service jobs? Can you explain what this would really bring to the table, what it would bring for Essex-Windsor?

Mr. Jerry Dias: Well, I'd bargained much better agreements than that.

The reality is that our members in the gaming sector are very well paid. These aren't your typical service jobs. These are very densely unionized jobs, and the pay is significant. These are well-paid, middle-class, working-class jobs. So it will definitely have a major impact on the economy in Windsor.

Mr. Chris Lewis: That's great. Thank you.

Mr. Dias, wouldn't passing Bill C-218 represent an expansion of gaming in this country? So isn't that in essence really what we're voting for?

Mr. Jerry Dias: We're legalizing what's already done. If you don't pass the legislation, people will continue to go offshore, which is going to have a negative impact on Canadian jobs, so why wouldn't the government want to attract a net benefit from this? Why wouldn't we want to control it in a safe, regulated environment?

This is about creating good jobs for the communities. It's about a decent revenue stream for municipal, provincial and federal governments, and as I said, it could be done in a safe environment. I think it's a winner all the way around for Canadians.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that I have only 30 seconds. I just want to thank all of the witnesses.

I really enjoyed, Mr. Dias, when you mentioned how it's going to kind of explode tourism, in a good way, in our area as well if we can get this passed. So thank you very much.

Mr. Jerry Dias: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Lewis.

We'll now go to Mr. Sarai for six minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses.

It's rare to have a bill where you have unions, the industry and those who are protecting vulnerable Canadians all agreeing that this legislation should pass. That's a good sign that it's about time and that it should happen.

My first question is also for Mr. Dias. I have many family members who are Unifor members, and a lot of constituents, so I'm very proud of the work you do in making sure that their employment and contracts are well done and that they have good middle-class family jobs.

I'd like to know—you've kind of answered in terms of Windsor—what your estimate is for additional jobs in this sector in terms of across Canada, particularly in British Columbia.

Mr. Jerry Dias: Thank you very much for your comments.

We are estimating that, as a minimum, it'll create at least 2,000 jobs across the country. B.C. has several casinos, in which we have organized. I can't give an exact number, but I would expect that you're probably looking at a good 500-plus jobs in B.C. as a result of this change.

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Thank you.

My next question is for Ms. White from the Responsible Gambling Council.

The only thing conservative about me is how I gamble. I would like to know how you're going to prevent addictions. What tools that might be more specific towards single-sport betting might you need to make sure that people don't get in a habit of addiction or losing their livelihoods over this?

• (1230)

Ms. Shelley White: Like there are for other forms of gambling, we would highly recommend that there are responsible gambling standards built into regulation to provide guidance to the operators in terms of how to incorporate a responsible gambling culture and strategy in their operations.

Second, we would recommend that each regulator, provincial authority, put in place a responsible Internet gambling fund, incorporating this into the revenue model so that a small portion—approximately 2%—is dedicated to responsible gambling protocols, such as prevention strategies, treatment and secondary treatment, as well as ongoing research measurement and evaluation—ultimately, taking a public health approach to this in which all the stakeholders are engaged. This is a complex issue. We need to have health care, mental health services, financial services, education, policing, responsible gambling...and industry at the table together, developing a strategy that's going to be effective for players, as well as for the community and for the regulators and operators.

With regard to health promotion, I have to say that prevention is paramount. This is the most effective and least costly measure to implement, providing young people, young adults, males, individuals from ethnocultural communities, and seniors with information about how they can gamble safely so that it is an enjoyable experience for them, an entertaining experience, and doesn't create any harms for them. Ultimately, prevention is the highest priority in terms of this.

Those would be at a very high level of what we'd recommend in terms of protecting consumers.

Mr. Randeep Sarai: I think preventing young people is probably key, especially young males who might get in the habit of betting on sports at an early age. However, if they know it's a recreational thing as opposed to a money-making scheme, that might be a better thing.

I'm sorry to cut you off. I'm going to ask Mr. Burns a question.

Money laundering in B.C. has been a big issue, especially in casinos. It's been a concern for British Columbians. I want to know whether single-sport betting would be vulnerable to the same. Would that be a concern for British Columbian gamers?

Mr. Paul Burns: It's more of a concern now because it's not legalized and organized crime is using it quite regularly as a money-laundering tool. That's the reason for bringing it into a regulated environment.

A lot of the recent discussions around the suggestion of money laundering in casinos in British Columbia have to do with...there's a lot of detection in.... Casinos file reports to FINTRAC, we have monitored players and we have banned players in British Columbia from using it.

We saw the influx of cash that came over a period about five years ago. The industry responded, it changed its policies and it learned as it saw this influx of cash. In fact, it probably wasn't so much money laundering occurring but bad people using the proceeds of crime to come and play in casinos. In some respects, that is what's really come out. The need to take away sources of funds from organized crime is very important in this.

The Criminal Intelligence Service Canada report from 2019 stated just that, that organized crime is active in the space, they use online sites and they use in-person bookmaking operations today to launder money. Taking this channel away from them is very important, and so is bringing it in where there is oversight. We are working with FINTRAC, law enforcement and gaming regulators to ensure there's a safe marketplace.

The Chair: We'll now go to Monsieur Fortin.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor for six minutes.

[*English*]

Go ahead, sir.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My question is for Mr. Burns.

Right now, Canadian gamblers must go on websites or abroad, such as to a number of American states, which allow single-event sports betting. I am still obviously talking about single events.

If Bill C-218 is passed, people will be able to bet on single sporting events in Canada.

Beyond the impact and the inflow of Canadian money related to single-event sports betting, what impact could this have in terms of foreign money that would ultimately be invested in casinos or other entities, here, in Canada?

• (1235)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Burns: We have a very strong regulatory environment in Canada. For someone to participate in the gaming industry, they need to be licensed. They need to have ownership. To have certain key jobs in casinos, you're required to go through a very thorough background investigation. Not just anyone can participate in the gaming industry. It's a very privileged industry, so in terms of bad players coming in—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: My apologies, Mr. Burns, but I think I misspoke.

We don't have much time.

My question was meant to find out whether, according to you, the foreign money coming in will have an impact in Canada. I am talking about American or French bettors, among others, who would be placing bets in Quebec or in Canada if Bill C-218 was passed.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Burns: No I don't. I think we're one of the last countries in the world to consider actually moving in this direction.

Regulated sports betting has been operating for dozens of decades in Europe. It's now in the United States and South America. We are one of the last countries to move to regulate sports betting in the fashion we're proposing here.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: If I have understood correctly, the additional revenue would come from Canadian gamblers.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Burns: Yes, it would. It would come from repatriating some of that money from illegal sources. Sports wagering is growing in popularity because of technology. It has been on an upswing for a number of years, so yes, it would bring that money back into legal channels.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Okay.

My second question is about match fixing.

Many experts worry that legalizing single-event sports betting will lead to more fixing and fraud. They are concerned about attempts to change the result of single sporting events, which is easier than changing the result of several events.

What do you think must be done to better combat the fixing of single-event sports betting?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Burns: Match fixing does occur.

Through regulated environments, you've been able to put eyes on sports. Every major professional league has monitoring activities where they use services in monitoring players. They prohibit players, coaches and officials from wagering.

There are organizations such as the International Centre for Sport Security that work on athlete education, working with sports books and law enforcement, monitoring betting lines and looking for unusual patterns. All of this occurs within a legally regulated framework.

Being able to put eyes on sport today is very important. That's why major sports organizations such as the International Olympic Committee, FIFA and others have all said that we need regulated sports environments so we can watch for match fixing. We have greater eyes, and greater player education is really the key on this, educating athletes so they understand how to deal with people who may approach them to fix a match. These are all important pieces to this.

The Centre for Ethics in Sport in Canada is a body that looks after doping requirements. They see educating players, athletes, on sports wagering as a very important part of the mandate that they'd like to take on.

There is lots of activity going on with this. That's why I say that Canada is very late to the party in terms of the global movement to look at regulating sports wagering.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Do you think our current regulations are sufficient to properly control the issue of sporting event fixing?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Burns: Yes, and provincial gaming regulators are looking at this very seriously and enhancing those regulations, as I mentioned in my remarks. They'll look at requiring data-sharing information. They will look at prohibiting athletes, coaches and officials from betting on sports, but they will also work with other bodies to make sure there's a robust framework to educate players and to educate law enforcement so they know what to look for.

As we go through this, I think we're going to see that the attention brought to this brings it out of the shadows, as I call it, and into the light so we can protect people. Greater consumer and athlete protection is extremely important. No one wants to see a match fixed. It doesn't work for the sports book operators. It doesn't work for sports, and it's something that we all want to fight hard to stamp out.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Do you think certain sporting events are currently being fixed, even if we are not talking about single-event betting?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Burns: In this country, there's only been one attempt at match fixing that occurred, and that was through the previous Canadian soccer league, which is a very amateur-level league that, somehow, sports books in Europe thought was equivalent to the English premier league, which it wasn't. They were trying to fix matches in Canada, but none of the bets were being placed here. They were being placed in Europe, Asia and other places.

It is a global problem. Interpol has a whole unit dedicated to chasing match fixers around the world. There is lots of activity. It can occur, but those discussions.... Unless you're watching, no one knows what's going on. That's why we need people to watch.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Fortin, just so you know, you had 30 seconds extra there to finish your time.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Thank you so much, Madame Chair.

The Chair: We will now go to Mr. Masse for six minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Madam Chair.

To Ms. White, you're right. Prevention is a huge issue.

When we started this 10 years ago, if you did a conservative estimate of \$12 billion in offshore, black market, and illegal, you're up to \$120 billion. If this doesn't pass this time, do you think there's a responsibility for the federal government to help provide more resources for addiction gaming?

When I started this 10 years ago, it was with a BlackBerry. Now we have our phones and everything else. We can now do this type of activity. It has really escalated, and we know it's happening. If we don't pass this in Parliament right now and provide tools or resources through a regulated market, do you think there's a responsibility for the government to act to make up the shortfall, because people are doing this activity?

Ms. Shelley White: As the gambling industry grows and diversifies, certainly there are more opportunities for people to gamble. I think the federal government leveraging its role with the Mental Health Commission of Canada and utilizing that to bring together the provinces to look at ways that additional resources and infrastructure could be created in each province to provide more information and better support would be extremely beneficial.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you for that.

Just quickly, Mr. Dias, with regard to your operations—I'm very familiar with the one in Windsor here, obviously, with David Cassidy, Dana Dunphy and others—can you describe the work ethic that's going on there? People may not be familiar with the fact that we have billions of dollars of infrastructure here and we now have to compete unfairly with the United States with the products and services they have. Despite that, can you speak to the level of professionalism we have here?

Can you also speak to the workforce and what they contribute back to the community? It's not just their wages and their donations to the United Way and those charitable things; it's also the supply system going to the service industry for operations like that and the significance of them.

Mr. Jerry Dias: There's no question that we are at a significant disadvantage to gaming workers in the United States—and, I will argue, because of this. If you look historically, especially with the Canadian dollar right now, hovering in the high 70¢ to 80¢.... Of course, we're living in a pandemic, but pre-pandemic it was not unusual on weekends to have the Windsor casino full of American workers. Now the U.S. casinos have all moved to legalize single-sports betting. That's having a huge impact.

Even though we are in some circumstances at a disadvantage, you'll see that our members at Windsor casino continue to win all of the awards within the Caesars chain. We have an incredibly highly skilled workforce. I think one of the things I'm most proud of in the community of Windsor is what our members contribute to the United Way campaign, to women's shelters, food banks and the Herbie Fund. Our members who work at Windsor casino are right at the forefront of all of that, as is our Local 444. We are an integral part of the community. Our wages play a major role in creating a vibrant community in Windsor and Essex county.

Mr. Brian Masse: During the COVID experience right now, I know that Kevin Laforet and David Cassidy have expressed that with this legislation passed, there could even be some micro jobs created, with maybe 50 or so workers to actually start their process of renovations, preparation, and even some services provided, whatever happens with the provincial rollout.

Is that something your members are prepared to do, continue to deal with the current situation but also find ways to get back to work right away?

• (1245)

The Chair: Who is that question for, Mr. Masse?

Mr. Brian Masse: It's for Mr. Dias.

The Chair: We might have lost him there. His screen is frozen.

Mr. Brian Masse: Okay. I'll go to Mr. Burns.

Mr. Burns, with regard to international competition taking place right now, you've mentioned that Canada really is a laggard with regard to this. Do you think we could leverage other international bodies to help deal with problem gaming, match-fixing and all those different things via Interpol and so forth? Do you think we can actually tap into some of that expertise to help us here as well? That's one thing I think we could actually use to our advantage, but I'll leave it to you to comment.

Mr. Paul Burns: There are many avenues. There is an international treaty, called the Macolin treaty, that was created with some Canadian input a number of years ago and that Canada has not signed. It was really to deal with fighting-match manipulation. The International Olympic Committee started over a decade ago making this one of their key pillars when they fought cheating at play, match fixing and doping, all within the same integrity of sport envelope. They've worked with international sports bodies. Now all of the major international sports bodies, such as the International Ice Hockey Federation, have training programs and monitoring programs for athletes on match fixing and education.

I sat at a conference that the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport held two Aprils ago. There were 70 sports bodies in that room, representing Canadian athletes, who said, yes, we need to make sure we can have greater protection for athletes and greater education programs. That's something Sport Canada needs to make a priority as we move forward. It works in partnership. There are many people who participate in the process to ensure integrity of sport. It's gaming regulators, sports-book operators, law enforcement, athletic bodies, teams, players—everybody has a role to play. For a number of international organizations this is a priority, and that's where we work.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Burns and Mr. Masse.

We'll now go to our second round of questions, starting with Mr. Cooper for five minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses.

I'm going to direct my first question to Ms. White or Ms. Parker, whoever wishes to answer.

Ms. White, you mentioned accreditation. I was interested in what type of accreditation work the RGC does. Why is it important, and what value does it provide to regulators and operators?

Ms. Tracy Parker (Director, Standards and Accreditation, Responsible Gambling Council): Thank you for the question. I'll take that one, as director of standards and accreditation at RGC.

I oversee our accreditation program called RG check, which is a defined accreditation program for both land-based and online operators globally. We operate in many Canadian jurisdictions but also in international groups as well.

The key benefits come from providing a defined way to measure the intentions and commitments that operators and regulators have. You hear a lot about commitments to responsible gambling and how important they are.

What an accreditation program like RG check does is to actually measure whether that's happening on the gaming floor and through the player platform. We survey players and employees to find out how the programs are operating and if they're operating as intended.

The program is comprehensive in terms of looking at employee training on responsible gambling and access to money standards. It includes how the games are selected, the information that's provided to players, the self-exclusion programs and the access to support and help that players get if they need it. It is very broad and comprehensive. It looks at standards at the cash at cage and standards of security. It looks at how all of the roles within the casino or with the platform operate, with the intention of responsible gambling.

• (1250)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Thank you. That's very helpful.

Again, I'll proceed to ask this of either Ms. Parker or Ms. White.

The first recommendation of RGC focuses on prioritizing and integrating consumer protection in the strategy with respect to provincial regulators. Could you talk a little bit about what that would look like?

Ms. Tracy Parker: As Shelley mentioned, and we've discussed, there are a lot of gambling channels that are already open to Canadians that are used by many. Opening the market to sports will create a different line of business with different unique considerations, potentially a new demographic, new information.

Building on the regulators and the provincial efforts around prevention and mitigation that are currently taking place, being able to customize the information for sports bettors.... Whether it's the illusion of control with sports betting that's higher, whether it's [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] that we'll see with sports betting, the opportunity to induce to gamble through promotions and in-game betting and celebrity sponsorships, there will be a new angle to betting that players will be exposed to with this bill passing that can be managed as an expansion of the current provincial effort.

Mr. Michael Cooper: I'll turn it over to Mr. Burns.

You talked about the fact that gaming in Canada is highly regulated. In the context of single-event sports betting, how can we ensure that each provincial authority has robust regulations and each operator has high-quality, responsible gambling standards in place? I take it that a lot of it is already there, and I think you alluded to that.

Mr. Paul Burns: It is a highly regulated industry, with a high level of controls and operations. It already comes with that; it's part of the DNA, let's just say, for lack of a better word.

When you look at what provincial regulators will look to—and it's a combination of some of the things that Shelley White has been talking about too—it's putting in those proper, right into the standards.

We have an industry committee working right now with regulators. We connect them to sports-book operators and other regulators in other jurisdictions, so they can learn from the best practices to ensure we have those age and identity verification models, we have a requirement that responsible gambling tools for player education are built into the product. Those are going to come in the regulatory framework.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Burns and Mr. Cooper.

We'll now go to our next questioner, Mr. Virani, for five minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair; and thank you to all the witnesses for a lot of informative testimony.

I'm going to start with Mr. Dias.

Jerry, it's always good to see you. Thank you for what you are doing with Unifor. There are many Unifor members in my riding of Parkdale-High Park and I've always appreciated the leadership you've shown.

I want to ask you, just at the outset, about something that is percolating in the background, which is the horse racing industry. In

the other iteration of this bill, which is a government bill, Bill C-13, there is a carve-out for horse racing. We understand from a lot of horse racing witnesses who are about to come before us that they're keen to see a carve-out, because they want to protect those jobs at those racetracks.

I'm in Toronto, close to Woodbine. Can you tell me about those workplaces and your sense of how we protect those jobs? I'm not sure whether they're unionized by Unifor, or if they're unionized at all, but from your perspective, how do we protect those workers?

Mr. Jerry Dias: Marc, would you like to answer this question?

Mr. Marc Hollin (National Representative, Unifor): Sure.

Speaking of Woodbine specifically, there are several unions that represent workers there. It's actually a fairly highly unionized workplace. We represent members there as well.

We haven't yet taken a position on the carve-out specifically for the horse industry, but we certainly would be in favour of a fair treatment across the board for all gaming operators, including those involved in horse racing and the betting there.

From my experience, having worked alongside the leadership there, the jobs at racetracks, similar to what Jerry had said about other gaming jobs, are much more high quality than those in the regular service sector. They have higher wages; they come with health benefits; they come with retirement security in some form or another. They're Cadillac jobs in the service industry. Therefore, anything we can do to protect the jobs that exist, but also grow them and create more jobs, we would be very supportive of—of course, as long as there are the right controls in place in terms of responsible gambling, and so on and so forth.

● (1255)

Mr. Arif Virani: Okay. That leads me to my next question, to both of you again, Mr. Hollin and Mr. Dias.

What I've also always appreciated is the equity issues that you put at the forefront of Unifor's activities. I've met with Unifor members on various issues that are just about equality in our society.

Given that vantage point and that philosophical orientation, what are you guys doing actively on this responsible gambling front in terms of all the push-back we get from the other side, which is that addictions, and so on, need to be considered?

We've heard testimony about this today from Ms. White and Ms. Parker, but I just wonder about Unifor. Whether it's your employees at the casinos, for example, or otherwise, how are you advocating for that responsible gambling approach?

Mr. Jerry Dias: First of all, as I am appearing before the panel, our national executive board is meeting right now—virtually, of course. Dana Dunphy, who is on our national executive board, one of 25 rank-and-filers, is the chairperson at Casino Windsor.

We've spent a lot of time with the various gaming owners, talking about equity issues, hiring practices and diversity, so you will find that our workplaces, by and large, reflect the communities in which we live. We are not only speaking to the employers about this within the gaming sector, but I can argue, predominantly in many sectors right across our union. We see these as well-paying, middle-class jobs and we have a heck of a discussion of what our workplaces should look like.

Does that answer your question?

Mr. Arif Virani: Yes. Thank you for that, Mr. Dias.

Maybe I'll just finish with Mr. Burns.

You mentioned those sole instances of match fixing in Canada being the English bookmakers meddling with a lower-level Canadian soccer league. I'm actually concerned about the lower-paid athletes.

I'm juxtaposing Auston Matthews, with a \$10-million contract, with somebody in the East Coast Hockey League with a \$30,000 contract. What do we need to do to ensure that lower-paid athletes who are still professionals but might also have secondary jobs are protected from match-fixing influences?

Mr. Paul Burns: Well, what you have, first off, is which sports will be bet on. That's where sports books operate. In many cases, it's not everything. They need to understand that the certainty of data and player performance all goes into what sports are bet on.

The big thing is, for any athlete, it's about education. It's amateur athletes. It's lower pay. It's all of those.

Professional tennis, because of its pay structure, has had many issues related to that. If you're outside the top 50 in the world, you don't really make any money in the tennis world.

There are those issues that need to be discussed, and bringing them into the open in those education programs is necessary. That's what is occurring around the world, and those discussions need to continue. They need to be brought into Canadian sport in a more direct and robust fashion.

For all of the sports bodies across the nation and the international bodies they work with, this topic is very much part of their programming and the work they do. It just becomes part of the dialogue that needs to happen.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Burns, and thank you, Mr. Virani.

We'll now go to Mr. Fortin for two and a half minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Dias, I understand that union members are permanently exposed, in the gambling industry, to pathological gamblers and to the various issues pathological gambling entails.

Can you tell me what your observations are in terms of this? First, do a number of your members have gambling issues? If so, how are you engaging in the fight against those problems?

[*English*]

Mr. Jerry Dias: Thank you. That is a very good question.

Obviously our members are trained in how to deal with aggressive gamblers. Our members have internal workplace protocols. If a patron is identified as being aggressive to anyone, it's dealt with immediately. Our members are surrounded with this on a regular basis but are incredibly well trained to deal with individuals.

As I said, then, we have workplace mechanisms and strategies in place to deal with this.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Do you think a number of your members are compulsive gamblers themselves?

[*English*]

Mr. Jerry Dias: Of course we have members who are compulsive gamblers; our members would be a reflection of the Canadian society as a whole. You'll find, however, that our members who work in the gaming sector are not allowed to participate. I'm not allowed to go, for example, into a Unifor gaming facility, just based on regulations. Our members, frankly, are not allowed to participate.

I'm not sure what their rates are for gaming members. Do we have members with addictions who work in various sectors? The answer is absolutely yes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Thank you, Mr. Dias.

I understand that your members are not allowed to gamble in the casinos where they work, but, to your knowledge, do they gamble in other casinos, on the Internet or abroad?

Do you know whether there are any problems of that nature?

[*English*]

Mr. Jerry Dias: There are not, to my knowledge.

We have a very active gaming council in which we have local union leadership from across the country participating. Among the numerous challenges that we are dealing with and that they speak of within our sector, we haven't talked about having discussions about our own members with these types of workplace addictions.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Monsieur Fortin, you had 20 seconds extra that time.

I will go to Mr. Masse now for two and a half minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hopefully I won't lose Mr. Dias this time.

With regard to building back from COVID, Kevin Laforet for Casino Windsor, and I'm sure it's across the other sectors as well—you mentioned Dana Dunphy and her crew there, and others.... If this is passed, even with restrictions, they've indicated that they can increase employment right now to prepare for it.

Mr. Jerry Dias: Absolutely.

Mr. Brian Masse: They're ready to go; they're eager.

Can you express a bit the frustration for some workers right now, the pride they take and their not being able to work at all?

Mr. Jerry Dias: First of all, having a restriction of 50 people.... I understand the preoccupation with safety, and that has to be everyone's preoccupation today; but this can't be a situation in which one solution fits all. You can't have a casino the size of Casino Windsor being restricted to 50 people and have a casino a fraction of its size being restricted to 50 people. That doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

There is no question that if in fact the single-sports betting is allowed, there will be infrastructure spending, jobs created preparing the casino for a new form of betting, and obviously it will create more jobs for the implementation of the strategy.

Mr. Brian Masse: Thank you.

Let me move quickly over to Mr. Burns.

I was in Niagara Falls and heard the same thing. They're looking at doing millions of dollars of expansions right now and using this as an opportunity—if we can get this done quickly through here and the Senate—with the numbers down, to invest and prepare.

Is that what you're hearing?

Mr. Paul Burns: It very much is. They would be able to move very swiftly to create an environment. They've identified the parts of the building they would like to renovate and then move to get the product available as soon as possible.

Bringing people back into gaming facilities is a priority, and having a new product and a new offering is what is really giving them some optimism at this point in time. Niagara Falls has not reopened at all since last March.

Mr. Brian Masse: I assume that it's going to be the same thing across Vancouver and other places like that. They'll all look at their operations now and at what they can do and use this to their advantage, because there's no getting back time.

Mr. Paul Burns: That's correct. We've been talking with provincial gaming organizations, the lottery and gaming corporations across the country. We want to see land-based gaming operators have the opportunity to offer sports books as quickly as possible and to find the right products to put in place. Those discussions are happening.

Really, across the country, everybody is quite eager. You heard from Mr. Hansen earlier. Also, the Alberta gaming and liquor commission and the British Columbia Lottery Corporation all have been publicly saying that we need to see this passed soon.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Masse, that was an extra 20 seconds for you as well.

With that, I'd like to thank our witnesses for your testimony today. We really appreciate your time.

Just before members go, I see that Mr. Cooper has his hand raised.

Go ahead, sir.

• (1305)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to seek clarification in terms of a deadline for the submission of briefs.

The Chair: That's exactly what I was going to talk about just now before we adjourn today.

There are two major deadlines.

The deadline for written submissions, Mr. Cooper, for all members, is March 11 at 4 p.m. That is taking into account the translation time and also giving enough time between that deadline and the deadline for submitting amendments as well. March 11 at 4 p.m. will be the deadline for written submissions for Bill C-218.

Also, then, the second deadline—I know we talked about it at our last meeting, but I'll just remind members—is March 23 at 4 p.m. That will be the deadline for members for amendments to Bill C-218.

If any of you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or to the clerk. As you know, the legislative clerk is at your service to help you draft amendments, should you so need that. Just reach out. We'll be happy to provide you with that support.

Then we will get right into our next meeting, which will be another meeting on Bill C-218, with more witnesses.

Are there more questions from members at this time on what's happening in the next couple of weeks? No?

Does that answer your question, Mr. Cooper?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Yes, very well.

The Chair: Go ahead, Monsieur Fortin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Chair, I want to begin by thanking you for giving the witnesses more time to answer questions. I appreciate that, given the delays related to interpretation.

Three motions have been proposed to the clerk's office concerning various issues related to the committee's management. I would like us to discuss them, but I don't want to prevent things from being carried out properly. Do you have a suggestion? I believe that you have seen the motions. They were proposed a week or two ago.

Could we do this now or when we come back from the parliamentary break?

What do you suggest?

[*English*]

The Chair: I'll leave it to the members to decide if they want to discuss Monsieur Fortin's motions. I believe the motions are in order. We've received enough notice for them to discuss them.

If we want to have a substantive discussion, Monsieur Fortin, then I suggest we do it at the next meeting, but if you'd like to quickly talk about them, we can do it now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Okay.

I don't really have any arguments to add. I think the motions speak for themselves. It's very simple. If you want us to do this right away, we can, if the members have the motions in question before them.

One of the motions concerns the linguistic review of documents, another one is about technical tests—

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: I'm sorry to interrupt Monsieur Fortin, but I am not getting any translation

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard): It should be working right now. Please keep going.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: I'm always happy when I see one of my anglophone colleagues experiencing technical difficulties related to interpretation, as I feel less alone. We are all going through this, and it's not because the interpreters are not doing a good job. On the contrary, they are doing an exceptional job.

Madam Chair, I was simply saying that the motions speak for themselves. They are very simple and short. The first one's objective is for documents to be submitted in both official languages. The second one calls for technical tests to be carried out before witnesses appear. Finally, the third motion concerns the linguistic review of documents.

To my knowledge, no one on the committee is opposed to these motions, but since this is an issue on certain committees, the moving of these motions has been suggested to all committees.

I am moving them, but I have no arguments to add.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Monsieur Fortin.

Before we engage in this conversation, I'd like to let our witnesses go so they don't have to stay for this part.

Thank you very much for being here today. Thank you for your testimony. If there's anything you would like to provide further clarification on, please don't hesitate to submit written clarifications or additions to your testimony today. We'd appreciate that.

Thank you. Now we'll go back to Monsieur Fortin. I'll turn to Mr. Clerk to explain these three motions and go from there.

Mr. Clerk.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: You are taking me a bit by surprise. I should open the text of those motions on my computer again, but I think I sort of remember the three motions.

[*English*]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Madam Findlay.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: I understand Monsieur Fortin wants to go ahead with it. I'm already late for my next meeting. We were supposed to adjourn at 10, and to start into a whole new area now, talking about.... I'm not prepared for this discussion, frankly. I didn't know we were going to be dealing with this today and I would ask that we end the meeting today and take this up next time.

● (1310)

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: I agree.

[*Translation*]

I agree, Madam Chair. I suggest that we continue this discussion at our next meeting, for five or six minutes. I have no problem with that. There is no urgency.

[*English*]

The Chair: Absolutely. We'll do that for the next meeting. Thank you, Madam Findlay. Thank you to all members.

This meeting is now adjourned.

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