Gambling—I

Annual Revenue in Illegal Gambling In U.S. Believed To Be $50 Billion

By HARRY FERGUSON

Washington—(UPI)—The other day a woman stepped out of a telephone booth here and was arrested on charges of operating a numbers game netting about $1,000 a day. This is a fairly common occurrence and is mentioned only because the arrest was made in the lobby of the Bureau of Internal Revenue where she had been employed for 20 years.

It is common knowledge that illegal gambling is rampant across the United States, and some persons in position to know put the annual turnover at $50 billion. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, armed with new powers from Congress and using advanced techniques, is waging massive war against the gamblers. He believes that gambling—rather than narcotics or prostitution, for instance—is the chief source of revenue for the American underworld.

A small but vocal group of people think Bobby Kennedy is wasting his time. They argue that the urge to gamble, the desire to get something for nothing is as basic in human nature as hunger and the sex drive. On the principle that if you can't lick 'em, join 'em, these people say the solution is for the federal government to legalize gambling and drive the racketeers out of business. Some of these proposals will be examined in detail later.

Fuel for Fire

Such incidents as the woman's arrest are fuel for the fire of advocates of legalized gambling. How, they argue, are you going to stamp out gambling when an alleged numbers ring is operating inside the citadel of the American tax structure? They follow up by telling two stories, both fictional and both so heavily encrusted with the moss of time that doubtless you have heard them:

—A man is losing steadily at roulette and a friend says to him: "Don't you know that roulette wheel is crooked?" The man replies: "Sure, but it's the only game in town."

—A man about to enter a horse race track falls to his knees and utters this prayer: "O, Lord, please let me break even today. My wife needs to have her appendix out."

The point they are trying to make, of course, is that nothing is going to prevent gambling. This argument gets short shrift at the Department of Justice. Bobby Kennedy is not interested in philosophical discussions about the gambling urge. The laws are on the books and he has sworn to enforce the laws. In a recent statement Kennedy explained what he was doing:

"In the Department of Justice the organized crime and racketeering section has been revamped and strengthened so that it can marshall all the resources of the federal government and provide effective assistance to state and local agencies . . .

"The number of attorneys working in this section has been expanded about three times to about 60. Each is assigned a specific part of the country and is responsible for all grand juries and trials in his area. Steps also have been taken to instill a new spirit of cooperation among the 27 federal law enforcement agencies. In criminal intelligence, for example, each agency previously kept its own separate files on underworld figures. Now this material is being consolidated daily into special files of the organized crime section, forming complete and up-to-date reports on some 1,500 big time racketeers. As a result, we have jailed racketeers who previously were able to elude punishment."

Some of the big fish who have been snared in Kennedy's net are Frankie Carbo, Blinky Palermo, Trigger Mike Coppola, Buster Wortman, Frankie Caruso and Kid Cann. Some were caught on income tax evasion and some on narcotics violations, but all of them knew their way very well along the intricate network of gambling that runs through the underworld.

If a man wants to be a professional gambler, he must buy a $50 wagering stamp, pay the federal government a tax at 10 per cent on his gross wagering receipts and a tax of $250 on a gaming device such as a slot machine. For reasons of their own thousands of gamblers try to evade the laws by not registering and not paying the taxes. That's when Bobby Kennedy's men strike, and sometimes their activities sound like something out of a suspense novel.

Hit 61 Cities

They once made simultaneous raids in 61 cities and arrested 140 persons. Last April 300 federal agents assembled from Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin hit Chicago in what was described as the largest raid in the history of anti-gambling enforcement. It was the climax of six months of investigative work, and each agent knew exactly where to go and the identity of the man he was seeking.

This was a drive against illegal book makers. Thirty-nine establishments were raided simultaneously and U. S. Attorney James P. O'Brien said he had smashed two entire syndicate book making rings.

Bobby Kennedy does not think he is going to stamp out gambling overnight. He is encouraged by new laws making it a felony to transmit bets interstate by wire or telephone; a felony to transport gambling devices such as numbers racket slips interstate; and a felony to travel interstate to promote or engage in gambling.

". . . The fight is far from won," Kennedy says. "The forces of organized crime are quick to move in when they find law enforcement temporarily lax or inefficient . . . It must be a long-range, determined effort."

Next: Lotteries, legal and illegal.

Welfare Workers To Receive Grants

Two Jackson county welfare employees have received grants for graduate study, the State Public Welfare commission announced today.

They are Roland Hartley and Mrs. Marjorie Haley, University of Washington.

Educational leave grants provide a monthly income to the student during the nine-month school year, Personnel Director Corinne LaBarre explained.

In line with new state policies this year's grant amounts have been raised. Grants now range from $350 to $450 depending on the size of the student's family. Previously, grants were limited to $300.

Trainees are required to accept a year's employment with the agency for each year of study. Many stay on long past their commitment.

More than three-fourths of the 46 former grantees now employed in key jobs throughout the state have already met their obligation and are continuing to work for the agency.

Small Worlds Around Us

By LYNN M. WATKINS

(Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1963)

Raccoon Never Overcame His Terror of High Places

He had no idea what the world looked like outside his hollow in the tree, or what problems he would be forced to face when he entered that unknown place. Neither was there any indication that this one little raccoon would be so much different than his den - mates or any of his thousands of raccoon ancestors who had preceded him.

His mother didn't know either. All her children had been born in this same hollow tree. She felt the extreme height of the den cavity was a decided advantage; it always had been.

From her high vantage point she could survey much of the surrounding woodland; it was especially beautiful to her when the full moon bathed the forest with soft, yellow light.

It was a roomy cavity, her nest in the old tree. The young raccoons even had room to wrestle and tumble over one another. As far as she knew, this was the most desirable den in the entire forest. The youngsters, if they could have appreciated the location, should have considered themselves lucky to have such a high nursery in which to safely spend their beginning days.

One Was Missing

Everything was just ducky right up until the night Mrs. Raccoon decided it was time the youngsters came out of the hollow tree and hunted their own food. Even then, things were good up to a certain point. The baby raccoons seemed happy to crawl out onto the nearby limb. From there, by easy stages, they moved down on the tree trunk. But one was missing. Mrs. Raccoon scampered back up the tree to see what was holding up the parade.

There on the limb, just outside the opening of the den, was one of the children, frozen in terror, and clinging desperately to the tree limb. She nudged him gently. He only gripped harder on the limb. She cuffed him with her paw. He buried his head between his front feet. He was terrified.

By some strange quirk of raccoon peculiarity, he had developed a fear of high places. Acrophobia comes close to being a terrible affliction to a raccoon, born high up in a hollow tree.

In spite of all Mrs. Raccoon could do, the little one refused to move down, or change his position on the limb. Several times during the night, he tried to back up into the den cavity. But even this was never accomplished; all night long he trembled and nervously gripped the tree limb. He was afraid to look down, and there was nothing to see by looking up.

The mother raccoon lost her patience. She and the normal - acting young ones pursued frogs in the nearby marshlands, and hunted for berries and other edibles.

Sheer loneliness and hunger drove the frightened young raccoon from one limb to a lower one; in between limbs, a long period of terror and waiting occurred. He fell the last few feet and landed with a thud on the spongy forest floor. He was on a firm footing; his fright drained away from him.

All this would probably have gone unnoticed, except that during the following several years, coon - hunters repeatedly chased a big raccoon that always sought safety in a burrow in the ground. Regardless of how closely he was pursued by baying hounds, never did he attempt to climb a tree. The little raccoon that had terror of high places never outgrew it; maybe he was not so much afraid of high places as he was afraid to look down.

"I don't want my child to be an athlete. So why bother about his physical fitness?"

Remarks like this strike at the very heart of our nation's physical fitness problem. The athlete gets all the physical conditioning he needs in school.

But the physically underdeveloped child—or the child who has no desire to participate in athletics—he's the one we should worry about.

And there are dozens of him for every physically-gifted child. Unless we stimulate these youngsters—unless we put into effect in our schools the vigorous activity programs they need—there will be more and more flabby and unfit Americans tomorrow!

So, urge your local school board to carry out a vigorous physical fitness program—every day for every girl and every boy.

If you would like more information, write to The President's Council on Physical Fitness, Washington 25, D.C.

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