

New Hampshire recently adopted a state-run sweepstakes rather than impose new taxes, and other states are considering a similar step; here are the pros and cons—and a chance to voice your opinion

GOOD OR BAD?

would be irresponsible to ignore a measure he considers both popular and fair.

But is it moral?

Protestant ministers overwhelmingly opposed the measure. The Rev. Hartley T. Grandin, executive director of the New Hampshire council of churches, said the sweeps "put New Hampshire in front in the practice of fiscal irresponsibility."

Episcopal Bishop Charles F. Hall described the measure as a "cheap expedient that would tarnish" the state's good reputation.

WILLIAM LOEB, publisher and president of the Manchester (N.H.) *Union Leader*, contends that there is nothing immoral about "voluntary taxation"—which includes levies on liquor, horse racing, and tobacco. "No one has to go to the track and bet. No one has to smoke tobacco. No one has to drink. Betting at tracks, smoking, or drinking are not necessities of life . . .

"But how do those who oppose the sweepstakes propose to raise this money? By an involuntary forced tax, of course—either a sales tax, an income tax, or some other kind of levy that people will have to pay, even though it will hurt them dreadfully to do so."

Besides, sweepstakes defenders ask, is gambling itself "immoral"? Lotteries are common in Europe. There's the famous Irish Sweepstakes, for example, and lotteries also are held throughout Scandinavia, in France, Austria, Spain, and Italy. Our own forefathers tried to finance the American Revolution with a lottery. George Washington was an inveterate ticket buyer. When Thomas Jef-

erson was in financial straits, he proposed a lottery on part of his Monticello estate.

Ah! sweepstakes opponents exclaim. Glad you brought up history—let's look at lottery history in the U. S. Many states had lotteries in the 1800s but ended them because they caused corruption. Louisiana is the most famous case. Lottery officials there grew so powerful they controlled the police, the legislature, and a vice syndicate. Federal regulations had to be enacted to free the state of its sweepstakes masters.

True, but so what? ask the proponents. Louisiana franchised private operators to run its lotteries. Under the New Hampshire setup, a governor-appointed board would run the sweepstakes and be answerable to state authorities.

AND, PROPONENTS add, what about the corruption caused by illegal gambling? Federal authorities believe that \$7 billion annually is wagered illegally in this country.

This money helps racketeers to buy into legitimate corporations. It helps them finance a growing narcotics trade and loan-shark businesses. Legal lotteries siphon off some of this corrupting money and channel it into constructive uses.

Publisher Loeb recalls that as a trustee of his church he once asked his minister if he would accept a contribution from a gambling club. The minister replied, "Why, of course! It's been in the devil's hand long enough. It's time that we put it to good use."

But aren't lotteries a form of "soak-the-poor" taxes?

That's what opponents of the

sweepstakes claim. Those who can least afford to gamble are most tempted by a lottery and its promise of a "pot of gold." Gambling investigations prove that the numbers racket and similar types of lotteries are most popular in economically depressed neighborhoods; the well-to-do gamble at clubs or on trips to Nevada, the Riviera, or swank race tracks. The opponents claim, therefore, that the rich will get out of paying added taxes by shifting the fiscal burden to those who are least able to shoulder it.

Backers of the sweeps have arguments against all these points. First, they believe that poor people who insist on wagering seek a form of gambling with a quicker payoff than lotteries. Secondly, they point out that the same persons who deride lotteries often advocate a sales tax as an alternative, and they ask: "Is a sales tax any easier on the poor? The poor pay as much tax on bread, milk, and other necessities of life as the rich man. At least under a lottery, the poor have the option of *not* paying the tax."

ARE LOTTERIES LEGAL?

A That is the crucial question of the future. Ministers have threatened to test New Hampshire's law in the state courts. But interstate legal problems may present New Hampshire with an even greater headache. The state has only about 350,000 residents eligible to buy sweeps tickets (you must be 21 or over), hardly enough to raise a net profit of \$4 million. Obviously, the state expects most of its money to come from out-of-staters.

Yet New Hampshire cannot mail

tickets to out-of-state buyers because it is against Federal postal regulations. Its newspapers cannot carry information about the lottery if they are to be mailed; even its radio stations are hamstrung by law from promoting the lottery. Both Federal and state officials in the New England area have promised to prosecute any person carrying lottery tickets across state lines. And in Washington, D.C., there looms Attorney General Robert Kennedy, a relentless foe of gambling. These problems lead Reverend Grandin to say: "I only hope the inherent difficulties and pitfalls of a state-operated sweepstakes will become so apparent that it will never be put into operation."

BUT LOTTERY backers are equally hopeful that these problems can be solved. Attorney General Kennedy has never prosecuted individual holders of Irish sweeps tickets, for example. Governor King has suggested that out-of-staters could visit New Hampshire, buy a lottery ticket, and deposit it with the state. And even if they did carry the ticket across state lines, how could authorities set up roadblocks and search travelers without acting unconstitutionally?

These are some of the lottery arguments that made New Hampshire a hot spot during the past cold winter. And they are bound to steam up tempers across the land as other states consider adopting a lottery as a possible solution to their growing financial problems. How do you feel about it? How would you vote on the question of a legalized lottery if your state ever considers the possibility of following the example set by New Hampshire?