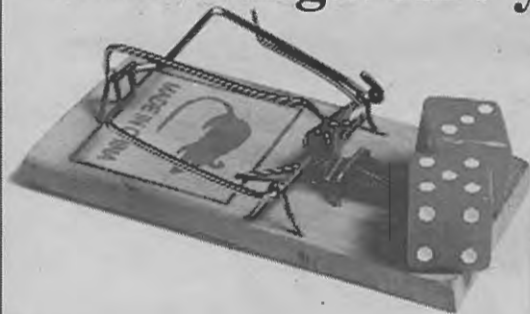


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Depression and suicide... No laughing matter!

Your faithful weekly gambling columnist, Howard Riback, must put down the joke book and the constant governmentisms today, in lieu of a topic that is as horrible to write about as it is to hear about; depression and suicide.

I am not for one minute insinuating or pointing fingers, that depression and suicide ONLY stem from gambling losses, but let us not live in a fool's paradise and admit that pathological and compulsive gambling have certainly helped drive the numbers of the depressed and suicide victims upwards. Depression and suicide are results of constant financial losses, family breakups, bankruptcies, overextended credit, and complete loss of logical human thought processes.

I will always go back to the simplest and easiest gambling-related comment ever made. The vast majority of players, be them of lotteries or casino games, lose. Of those people, again, the vast majority lose money they cannot afford to lose. Taking this statement further, all forms and all levels of depression kick in once gambling begins and losing money begins to mount.

There is a huge level of pressure in a person's mind when the 250 dollars tucked away in their wallet whose original purpose was for grocery shopping now must be replaced.

Canadians have been losing their jobs by the tens of thousands for the last year or so, and it has never been so important to put away a few extra dollars here and there, if possible, for a rainy day or emergency. To have this money sucked out of the pants, wants and purses of Mr. And Mrs. Canadian, is itself a heinous crime that all of Canada's lottery commissions should be terribly ashamed of.

There have been so many statistics given out by both the provincial and federal governments, who knows what

to believe?

The casinos themselves put out statistics that are illogical and completely non-believable. People are killing themselves in Canada at a rate of approximately 1 every day and a half according to a Globe and Mail article published a few weeks ago.

The Canadian Safety Council estimates 200 problem gamblers kill themselves each year. An Ontario professor has said, 'the less people know about gambling-related suicides- at least as far as provincial governments are concerned- the better for them, politically speaking. However, governments know their fingerprints are all over these needless deaths.'

Research has shown that there are no actual country-wide statistics by any of the provinces Lotto Commissions with regard to gambling and suicide, yet we hear of stories in every community that someone has jumped from a building after accruing massive gambling debt.

Unbelievable! Only in Quebec can you lose thousands of dollars at the casino, take a bus to a subway station, then jump in front of the oncoming subway, and our dear friends at Lotto Quebec don't consider that a gambling-related suicide. But if you hang yourself on the coat hook on the inside of the bathroom casino door, they do consider that a gambling-related suicide, hence the government numbers issued on gambling-related suicide are not remotely close to the truth. Far too many Quebecers take their own life as the ultimate loss.

Far too many Quebecers take their own life as a result of gambling. The time has come, albeit way too late, that gambling should just be a game.

For more information Howard P. Riback the Gambling/Gambling Specialist and Inspirational Speaker a.k.a. "The Cleaner" can be reached at 514 659 5621 or howard@theribackgroup.com or view his website at www.theribackgroup.com.



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