

**CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL
(SECOND READING)
28 September 1921**

Edith Cowan opposed the proposal to permit gambling opportunities at community fairs and other places.

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [8.19] : I feel that I cannot support the second reading of the Bill. We ought not to get down to such a low level that we can take care of our poor and sick and our wounded soldiers, and our children who need air, only by offering a quid pro quo in the shape of gambling. I cannot believe that our spirit of humanity has fallen so low. Surely taxation is the right method of providing money for these objects. I am here to stand for that. I contend that the needs of sickness, the needs of poverty, and the needs of our wounded soldiers should be met either by direct giving or by direct taxation. I have listened to the Colonial Secretary, and I know from past experience, from what one sees of children with whom one is brought into contact, that the gambling methods which the Bill proposes to legalise are very deleterious. One does not want to see gambling, either at bazaars or in any other place, extended further by Act of Parliament. Personally, if I were only earning 5s. a week I would rather contribute in taxation a few pence from that pittance than see charitable institutions obliged to depend for aid on gambling pursuits, the wherewithal being obtained at the price of a quid pro quo in the shape of excitement or the chance of winning a large sum of money. In contributing a few pence weekly under such circumstances, I should feel that I was doing more for charity than people who contributed pounds in that direction through the medium of gambling. I have here a note from the Child Welfare Committee which met last week. It was a large conference, at which religious, educational, municipal and social bodies were represented; and the conference passed the following resolution:

That this conference condemns the Bill before Parliament seeking to legalise lotteries for charitable purposes.

That resolution was passed on Wednesday, the 21st inst.

Mr LATHAM: Some members of that conference were unpatriotic enough to remain sitting down while the National Anthem was being played.

Mrs COWAN: They may have contributed to funds for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers, all the same. Their conduct in the respect referred to does not make any difference to the principle of this Bill. Certainly we should make it illegal to have children take any part in lotteries. When young people reach the age of 21 years, they can have the right to decide the gambling question for themselves. I quite realise the object of the sponsor of the Bill; I fully acknowledge that he wishes to do good. The proposal appeals to one in a specious manner, holding out the prospect of doing some good; but if we

have not citizens who are willing to give either directly or by way of taxation what it is a duty to give, we shall not improve the position by passing a Bill to permit gambling, and indulgence in lotteries.