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# Horses Aren't Issue in Coming Election

A FRIEND used to say whenever he got into a controversial situation: "I'm not against apples; I'm just against worms!"

Gambling interests promoting pari-mutuel betting on horse racing are trying to instill a guilt feeling among citizens that if they vote against the proposal they are voting against horses.

Horses are not the issues in this election. The issue is gambling, a vice that has wrecked numerous homes, bankrupted businesses and individuals, and ruined the lives of countless people.

It's not that we are against horses. We are just against gambling, to paraphrase our friend's adage. Gambling is a "wormy part" of the horse-trading business, feeding on other people's work.

A broader issue involved is that gambling interests are aligned with liquor interests in an effort to convert Oklahoma into a wide-open state where anything goes. Although gambling and "MORE-liquor-by-MORE-drinks" are to be voted upon in separate elections, the two vices

go together like a horse and carriage.

Race track gamblers openly admit that they regularly violate state laws by gambling at private tracks now. Is that evidence they would observe laws and regulations if race track gambling were to be given a cloak of legality?

Restaurant and bar owners regularly flaunt laws against serving liquor by the drink to consumers who must be well aware that they are scofflaws by patronizing such places. Many of them get into their cars and drive away in a drunken condition.

Does that promise that liquor control laws would be observed more honestly under other regulations? Would "MORE-liquor-by-MORE-drinks" decrease the hazards of drunken drivers?

State law enforcement officials, sheriffs, police, district attorneys and judges have knowledge that these law violations are going on and they must recognize they are failing to perform their sworn duties. Would they be more faithful to

their responsibilities if Oklahoma were to be declared a wide-open state?

The answer to all of these questions is "NO!" Habitual law violators, scofflaws, misfeasors in law enforcement and those who profit from peddling vices may be expected to continue their ways.

What gambling and liquor interests are trying to do is to immerse all Oklahomans officially as partners in their nefarious businesses. They do not wish to improve their ways, so they strive to pull others down to their level. They want to acquire respectability by legalization, rather than by self-improvement.

Promoters claim that "horse racing is a good clean sport." It might be under fair conditions, with no cheating and gambling involved. However, gambling is not "good clean sport" and it is gambling — not horses — that we will vote on Sept. 21.

No matter how one might try to whitewash it or gild it, he cannot make an addictive vice into a respectable business.