

Let Profits of Vice Pay More of Costs

NOW THAT a majority of Oklahoma voters have decided that our state should compete for the title of "Sin Center of America" it seems logical that those who profit from gambling, liquor, etc., ought to pay more of the costs pertaining thereto.

A man who has had four car accidents in the last couple of years told me: "Three of those wrecks were caused by drinking drivers and none of them had insurance. I'd like to see a law passed making liquor manufacturers and sellers financially responsible in such cases."

He pointed out that courts have held General Motors and Ford responsible when defective cars caused wrecks. Liquor makes drivers defective, wrecking both cars and people.

Why not do as he suggested? A gross production tax of 30 percent on alcoholic beverage manufacturers, 20 percent value added tax on wholesalers, and a 10 percent sales tax at retail might do to start a public indemnity fund.

Race track gambling promoters hadn't got their first pari-mutuel bet down before they began demanding that their share of the "handle" be increased from the 6 percent they wrote into the constitutional amendment they drafted.

Gambling is a game of greed and it would be only fair for the state to be as greedy as the promoters. Whatever the promoters may get as an increase (if any), the state ought to get twice as much. It's not enough right now.

Tobacco ought to be carrying a bigger share of its costs, too. Government is addicted to nicotine already through the tax route, but manufacturers should help pay for medical care required by those who get lung cancer from smoking.

Since some chambers of commerce supported race track gambling and liquor by the drink as tourist attractions, maybe they would be interested in prostitution. We already are over-run by pornography, licentiousness and sexual perversion, and we aren't collecting

taxes on them.

By selling licenses to sex purveyors and permits to patrons a good deal of money might be raised. And money is more important than morality, isn't it?

While we are at it, why not commercialize crime? Crime does pay, and it also costs. If we legalized burglary professionals could be required to buy annual licenses for fees of \$1,000 to \$100,000 or more. What criminologists call "victimless crimes" could be licensed on a graduated scale.

Wouldn't you rather be robbed by a licensed burglar with an established location instead of some fly-by-night who might be a paroled murderer or rapist? If thieves were licensed the state could accept "payment in kind" and hold auctions to "fence" stolen goods.

Of course, there are catches to this speculation. The Scriptures say "The wages of sin is death," and Jesus asked: "For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"