

Rogala's addiction to lotteries turned him into a 'ticket junkie'

Continued from A1

ore than 20 outlets in the Hamilton area in recent years.

He made one final desperation foray on the weekend of Jan. 7 when he dropped several thousand dollars at outlets from Hamilton to Oakville.

He was being pressed to pay back about \$1.7 million he had taken from dozens of clients to invest in a phoney bridge financing scheme.

He did not spell out exactly what he was referring to, saying only it involved a kind of business that doesn't keep books.

These revelations left his victims — who were robbed of between \$4,000 and \$210,000 — in a state of shock and disbelief.

"I would have greater sympathy for him if he had blown the money on wild women, fast cars and gambling junkets to Las Ve-

members were "absolutely shocked" when they learned about the lottery addiction.

"I've heard he spent as much as \$10,000 to \$14,000 a week on lotteries," he said.

He added the Ontario Lottery Corporation should bear some of the blame for Mr. Rogala's downfall for allowing him to buy so many tickets.

"He couldn't help himself. They should make it mandatory for ticket buyers to sign a document if they buy more than a few hundred dollars in tickets (to keep track of them)," Mr. Kott said.

Annette Taylor, a spokesperson for the corporation, said she was not aware of Mr. Rogala's problem and didn't know of any research indicating people become addicted to lotteries.

"We certainly don't encourage people to purchase large quantities of tickets. The average player spends \$11.40 a month," added Ms Taylor.

Ironically, Mr. Rogala never got to harvest his last crop of tickets, which was turned over to Walter Heaton, the trustee in bankruptcy.

Mr. Heaton — who has assigned a clerk to check the tickets — estimates the final run will yield about \$1,000 in small wins.

The money will be thrown into the pot, along other assets totaling about \$360,000, to be divided on a pro-rated basis among the 50 creditors.