Written evidence submitted by Chris Roper

I am an ex-prostitute. I was never legally hassled during the time that I offered sexual services. Maybe this was because I was able to operate in clubs. Since then I have gone on to do other quite different things, with reasonable measures of success.

"Whether criminal sanction in relation to prostitution should continue to fall more heavily on those who sell sex, rather than those who buy it."
What a biased question!
Maybe one should ask:
   Whether condemnation in relation to prostitution-law-reform should continue to fall more heavily on those who have sincere moral objections, rather than those who are foolish enough or knavish enough to ignore the evidence from New Zealand, the Amnesty report and the groundswell of general opinion.
or
   Whether condemnation and ridicule in relation to law-makers should continue to fall more heavily on those genuinely disagree, rather than those ask stupid smoke-screen questions such as were asked two years ago, ignoring various elephants in the room, and bypassing the real issues.

If someone disagrees I can respect them. If they give this bullshit, I don't.

But you, dear kind sir or madam are one of the few honest politicians. You can see that this is a smokescreen question.

Bear in mind:-
   • New Zealand successfully decriminalised prostitution in 2003.
   • Amnesty International vote in 2015 in support of full decriminalisation.
   • Letters you are getting such as this one.

"What the implications are for prostitution-related offences of the Crown Prosecution Service's recognition of prostitution as violence against women."
Another smokescreen question.
It is the current laws that effectively in practice every day now are leading to violence against women. It is the current laws that cause violence against women. Criminalisation forces sex workers to work in isolation at greater risk of attack (The Scotsman, 2008). Working on the street is six times more dangerous than working indoors (Barnard and Hart, 2001). Yet premises are routinely closed using brothel-keeping law and closure orders. The simple answer is to fully decriminalise.

"What impact the Modern Slavery Act 2015 has had to date on trafficking for purposes of prostitution, what further action is planned, and how effectively the impact is being measured."
Trafficking is forced or bonded labour, abduction, kidnapping, false imprisonment, rape, grievous bodily harm, extortion. Existing laws cover all these offences and could be used to prosecute the assailants of women and children, whatever work they are being forced into. False claims that over 80% of sex workers are trafficked have been peddled by politicians looking to increase the criminalisation of prostitution. In fact, less than 6% of sex workers in the UK are trafficked (Mai, 2011). "Many migrants prefer working in the sex industry rather than the "unrewarding and sometimes exploitative conditions they meet in non-sexual jobs" (Evening Standard, 2011).

Whether further measures are necessary, including legal reforms, to:
   A/ Assist those involved in prostitution to exit from it
Amnesty International’s path-breaking vote in August last year was in support of full decriminalisation (not just sex workers but also clients, indoors and outdoors), and its call on governments to review the prostitution laws and provide resources in the form of "state benefits, education and training and/or alternative employment" to help sex workers leave prostitution if they want.

**B/ Increase the extent to which exploiters are held to account**
As before
Existing laws cover all these offences and could be used to prosecute the assailants of women and children, whatever work they are being forced into.

**C/ Discourage demand which drives commercial sexual exploitation**
"Discourage demand"!
Most politicians have as part of their religious belief that Economic Growth is a good thing, or at least they constantly spin it to us.
So any talk of "Discouraging demand" by this standard is ludicrous.
Make your mind up, do you want Economic Growth or not?
Oh, and of course, exploitation is a myth.
Who wrote this? Slipping in myths here and there.
Actually, this is even sillier than that, how can the govt reduce people’s sexual appetite?
This last one gets the prize for the silliest question.