betting-houses for ready-money betting it is unlikely that they existed or were at all numerous. Nevertheless, by 1853 betting-houses had become numerous in the larger towns and had grown to be a nuisance.

24. The rapid growth of ready-money betting-shops between 1845 and 1853 is usually explained, according to the English Royal Commission, by reference to the provision in the Gaming Act, 1845, which rendered gaming transactions unenforceable. This is said to have led to the practice of requiring money to be paid in advance. The English Commission thought another factor might also have operated—namely, the decision of the Courts in 1845 that sweepstakes were illegal. These lotteries had a great vogue in public houses and elsewhere, the stake being paid in cash and in advance. When sweepstakes were declared illegal, bookmakers, and, no doubt, former promoters of sweepstakes, developed betting businesses on a cash basis.

25. In moving leave to bring in a Bill for the suppression of betting-houses (the Betting Act, 1853), the then Attorney-General, Sir Alexander Cockburn, who later became Lord Chief Justice of England, said that the evils which had arisen from the introduction of the ready-money betting-shops were notorious and acknowledged upon all hands. The object of the Bill, he said, was to suppress the opening of houses, shops, or booths for the purpose of betting. He had in mind premises, the owner of which held himself out as ready to bet with all comers. He rejected emphatically the suggestion that the licensing of these houses would be the more effectual course. It is not without significance that Sir Alexander Cockburn expressed himself as believing that it would be discreditable to the Government and likely to tend to increase the mischief instead of preventing it if betting-shops were licensed. Subsequent experience in South Australia, where alone the expedient has been adopted, has confirmed the correctness of his view.

26. The Act of 1853 prohibited betting-houses and declared them to be common nuisances. This is the origin of credit betting in England. That form of legal betting A. P. Herbert has defined as " an historical accident " ; and it is so in the sense that it happened through cash-betting shops being the immediate subject of legislation.

27. The enforcement of the provisions of the Betting Act, 1853, made it impossible for a bookmaker to keep a house or shop for ready-money betting, and he went into the streets in search of business. Local authorities first attempted to deal with the difficulty by by-laws. That system of repression was unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, and the House of Lords in 1901 and again in 1902 appointed a Select Committee " to inquire into the increase of public betting amongst all classes and whether any legislative measures are possible and expedient for checking the abuses occasioned thereby."