

33. It was not until 1928 when the Race Course Betting Act of that year was passed that the use of the totalizator at certain racecourses was allowed. It was permitted with a view to extracting from betting some contribution to the sport of horse-racing and horse-breeding.

IN NEW ZEALAND

34. From 1840 onward the law in New Zealand followed a course of development different from the law of England. To begin with, the English Betting Act of 1853 did not apply to New Zealand, and similar provisions were not brought into force here until the Gaming and Lotteries Act of 1881 was passed.

35. At that time portable totalizators had already apparently been in use for a year or two at various race meetings. They were of a crude and elementary character, and their efficiency must have been of a low order. However, the operation of the totalizator, inefficient and inadequate as it was, must have interfered to some substantial extent with the business of the bookmakers operating on the same courses, or the bookmakers must have foreseen in the totalizator a strong future competitor, for various attempts of more or less potency were made to have the totalizator ostracized. The opponents of the totalizator were constituted of two, what might be thought, incompatible factions—bookmakers who were seeking a monopoly of gambling, and the Churches and all those elements in the community which were opposed to gambling in any shape or form. Despite its incongruity, a similar alliance in future is not beyond the limits of possibility, particularly if the lessons of experience are disregarded by those to whom gambling is abhorrent.

36. The high-water mark of the attack upon the totalizator came in 1896 when the second reading of the Bill to abolish the totalizator was carried in the House of Representatives. The Bill was carried by a fair majority, but it never reached a third reading.

37. Over the next ten years the conflict was continued without either side gaining any recognizable advantage. Just how divided popular opinion was is shown by the fact that in 1907 the then Premier, Sir Joseph Ward, laid on the table of the House of Representatives a table showing the number of petitioners for and against the totalizator. The table showed that there were 36,311 signatures in favour of the totalizator and 36,471 against it.

38. Apparently prior to 1907 the interests of the bookmakers had been suffering some retrogression. Although their activities, except in a few particular respects, were nowhere prohibited by statute, they had been gradually expelled from racecourses by the action, probably co-ordinated, of individual racing clubs. Their activities were only