

60. In this state of public opinion any attempt at suppression, in contradistinction to reasonable regulation, must be regarded as unwise and impracticable. The only questions which evolve in consequence for consideration are questions as to means and methods and the duty of the State with respect to them. To the establishment and maintenance of the sport as a sport for sport's sake and as an amusement, the influence of the State should, we think, be directed, whilst moderate gambling as a source of pleasure and interest should be countenanced. Such an attitude on the part of the State has the merit that it will least offend against the scruples of those who hold that gambling is a sin, whilst it will conform to the views of those who, upon ethical grounds, hold that gambling is not, in itself, sinful, but that carried to excess it may become so. It will conform also to the views of those who see no moral wrong in gambling, whilst it will lend support to the efforts of those directly concerned with the administration of racing and with its maintenance upon the highest level.

61. The ultimate question that therefore evolves is as to the form of regulation to be adopted, involving, as that does, the forms of betting to be discouraged and the form or forms to be made available. This raises, in an acute form, the problem of off-course betting, for no objection for present purposes has been taken to the totalizator as the means of on-course betting.

SECTION 4.—OFF-COURSE BETTING

SUPPRESSION IMPOSSIBLE—REGULATION FAVOURED

62. Despite the fact that, by the Gaming Amendment Act, 1920, the business or occupation of a bookmaker was made unlawful, the business of bookmaking has thriven in New Zealand. The measure of its success may be judged from the fact that whereas approximately £20,000,000 went through the totalizators of the country during the 1945-46 racing year, a sum of £24,000,000 was, with some show of credibility, estimated by the secretary to the Dominion Sportsmen's Association, as having passed through the hands of the bookmakers engaged in business in the country. Despite its magnitude, the correctness of the estimate is supported by the Police Department, which reports that there is reason to suspect that no less than 763 persons are at present engaged in bookmaking. The Police Department suspects that there are 153 bookmakers and their agents in Auckland, 192 in Wellington, 62 in Christchurch, 55 in Palmerston North, and quite considerable numbers in most of the smaller towns.

63. This being so, then if off-course betting is to be permitted at all, the question, and it is a major one, evolves as to the means which should be adopted to eliminate this wholesale system of illegal book-