

82. To sum up to this point on the topics already discussed, the Commission is not prepared to recommend anything which would foster or encourage credit betting. It is not prepared to recommend that betting at totalizator odds be made legal, and is wholly unconvinced that any system of taxation of betting with bookmakers could be devised which would produce any reasonably sufficient, assured, and sustained revenue to either the Crown or the racing clubs. In any event, there is no assurance that the licensing of a certain number of bookmakers would eliminate illegal bookmaking. The Dominion Sportsmen's Association has itself no confidence that it will, and experience has shown that it will not. The lack of confidence of the association is all the more justified as it is opposed to imprisonment for illegal bookmaking even if bookmakers are licensed as it proposes. That licensed bookmakers could or would effectively co-operate with the police in suppressing illegal bookmaking, we seriously doubt. The licensing of bookmakers has not proved effective elsewhere, and the imposition of taxation upon licensed bookmakers seems to have a tendency to provoke illegal bookmaking. Such was the experience in Australia, where it was demonstrated that even the slightest burden of taxation above an almost irreducible minimum imposed upon legitimate bookmakers called into existence illegal bookmakers who could operate free of the burden. The most that can be said, therefore, is that the licensing of bookmakers would in some measure minimize the amount of illegal off-course betting. It would not eliminate it.

83. The concomitants associated with the licensing of bookmakers being thus condemned, there nevertheless remains for consideration the fundamental question as to whether, all other considerations apart, it is desirable that bookmakers should be licensed. It can, we apprehend, never be wise for any State to call into existence or to lend recognition by legislation to a class of persons engaged in an uneconomic occupation which has dangerous potentialities. However innocuous or ethical betting by individuals in small sums within the limit of their means may be, that practice is essentially in the nature of a luxury, and it is undesirable that a class should be created whose interest it is to provoke indulgence in that luxury by ever-widening groups of the community.

84. This conclusion is of primary importance because it would be to display an ignorance of human nature to believe that if bookmakers were licensed they would abandon the system of agency and canvass by which they have thriven in the past. On the contrary, it must be recognized that the tendency of a licence system would be to provoke not reasonable indulgence, but over-indulgence. There is every reason to believe that the present canvassing system, despite its illegality, is both extensive and thorough. It extends to factories and offices and other places where, by reason of the necessities of their occupations,