

PART VII.—MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS CONNECTED WITH RACING AND BETTING

SECTION 1.—TIPPING

349. Probably no penal provision of the Gaming Act, 1908, is more consistently flaunted or more successfully evaded than that part of section 30 which purports to prohibit tipping—*i.e.*, the giving of “advice as to the probable result of any horse-race.” In its application to the professional tipster who advertises his calling, the section has had a salutary effect, and, as a class, these men have long since disappeared. As a means, however, of preventing newspaper tipping, it has increasingly become a dead letter. All newspapers regularly give for each race on every programme a summary comprising two or three “horses in form” or horses “likely to be favoured in the betting.” Some of them go so far in their final issues before big meetings as to print a comparative table setting out their own selections alongside those of other papers.

350. In recent years, too, a number of publications registered as newspapers have come into being and are openly sold which consist almost entirely of lists of acceptors for races with figures indicating their recent performances, and the names of those considered likely to win or run into places. We have not heard of any daily or weekly newspaper or any of the pseudo-newspapers ever being prosecuted. We do not think that the practice induces a desire to bet that would otherwise be absent; on the other hand, if it does anything at all it, in our opinion, causes racegoers to give more thought to form probabilities than to mere fancies. To the extent that it makes available to the public at large the conclusions and opinions of trained and professional observers whose reputations are to some extent involved it serves a useful purpose. In any event, the form and performances of racehorses is news in a very real sense, and we can see nothing to be gained and much to be lost by suppressing its publication. Only ill consequences accrue from the uncertainty and mystery which suppression engenders. We think, therefore, that the public should be told in an open and public way all that is to be told concerning horses and their form.

351. We therefore recommend that section 30 be amended to permit of newspaper tipping. Care should, however, be taken to avoid the possibility of the individual advertising tipster ever again emerging. He and all who offer tips for direct personal gains should be rigorously excluded.

352. Anything in the nature of tipping over the broadcast system is not recommended. On the contrary, we think it should be specifically prohibited.