

SECTION 2.—PUBLICATION OF DIVIDENDS

353. The question of publication of dividends can scarcely be divorced either from the problem of illegal off-course betting or from the welfare of racing generally. The first of these topics is more fully dealt with under the heading of "Broadcasting." In some sense the publication of dividends might be regarded as an inducement to gambling. It was not, however, for this reason that the publication of dividends was first prohibited. That prohibition was but one step in the direction of confining all betting to racecourses, an aim which has never been achieved.

354. Upon the whole, we are inclined to think that the publication of dividends will operate in some measure to divorce bettors from the illegal bookmakers. The opportunity thus made possible to the public of comparing dividends actually paid with payments received subject to bookmakers' limits should be productive of good results. If the information is concealed from bettors, they will continue to seek it from the bookmakers, and this will establish or maintain contact with the latter. It seems wiser, therefore, to regard the dividends paid at race meetings as constituting a reasonable item of news fit for publication. We feel that more good will result from publication than from suppression, and therefore recommend that the publication of dividends be permitted. In any case the prohibition, it is not generally realized, was solely against publication in newspapers or other documents. In a limited sense the giving of dividends over the telephone is ironically enough one of the few legal activities of bookmakers. It would be perfectly within the law as it now stands for dividends to be broadcast over the air. It is not without significance that the Commissioner of Police is unhesitatingly in favour of repeal of the present prohibition imposed by section 30 (4).

SECTION 3.—BROADCASTING

355. The past and still current practice of the Broadcasting Service in respect of racing news and information was the subject, if not of attack, at least of pointed adverse comment by the associated Churches. Objection was taken to the broadcast of running descriptions of races from racecourses and to the broadcasting from time to time during the day race meetings are held anywhere in New Zealand of the results of races at such meetings. The dissemination over the air of the supplementary information which usually accompanies the running description of events was also the subject of objection.

356. The attitude of the associated Churches is primarily based upon the view firmly held by their members that the broadcasting of topical racing news and information concerning races at meetings currently being conducted is a powerful stimulus to betting and a valuable