

PART VIII.—DOG RACING

375. The application for the grant of totalizator licences in respect of this sport was enthusiastically and sincerely supported by the evidence of a number of witnesses taken at various points in New Zealand. These witnesses were of one or other of two classes. Either they were men who, before or during their residence in New Zealand, had had some contact with dog-racing in England or in Australia, or they were returned servicemen who had some contact with the sport during their period of service. Of their sincerity and enthusiasm there could be no doubt.

376. The claims were based upon the existing and potential degree of public interest in the sport, an interest which, it was suggested, would become overwhelming in its proportions if the sport were, by medium of the totalizator, put into a position to provide suitable and attractive amenities for the public. It was also stressed that this is a form of sport which particularly caters for working-men in that totalizator tickets are normally on the 2s. basis; whilst production would not, it was claimed, be in any way interfered with, because it was proposed that the meetings should be held at night. Additionally, it was claimed that greyhound-racing would not interfere with or jeopardize any other form of outdoor sport, but would merely provide further pleasurable and healthy recreation for many as well as a means of livelihood for a numerous personnel.

377. The tremendous appeal of dog-racing as a gambling medium is demonstrated by the references made to it by counsel for the Greyhound Association and by the facts recited in the stated case filed with the Commission. It is there said, as was emphasized by counsel, that dog-racing totalizator takings in England, which were £29,352,000 in 1938, had grown to £120,000,000 in 1943. Those figures are based on a 2s. totalizator ticket. In 1946 totalizators on British tracks took the record sum of £200,000,000, of which £182,000,000 went back to investors. These figures are for England only. Scotland and Ireland have proportionately high figures. In 1939 the tracks at Florida, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Arkansas attracted 1,335,378 spectators, and the totalizator handled 19,145,979 dollars.

378. In New South Wales on the 23rd October, 1939, on a course completed at a cost of £33,000, a meeting conducted by the National Coursing Association was attended by 24,000 people, and the balance-sheet for twelve months' racing on the track showed a total revenue of £74,622. Prize-money distributed in New South Wales amounts to £150,000 annually, 3,000 people are fully employed, and approximately 20,000 people derive some measure of their livelihood from the sport.