

SECTION 4.—PROTECTION OF INTERESTS OF PUBLIC

183. Apart from the legislative authority of the two Conferences and the subjects in respect of which control is exercised under the rules by the Conferences respectively and by their respective executive committees, a very large degree of the actual control of racing falls upon the officials of the individual racing clubs. Their control extends to the allotment of stake-money within the framework of the minimum limits fixed by the rules, the provision of amenities for the public, the upkeep of the course, and the control of the actual racing. If, as has been suggested, stakes are stabilized in the manner proposed, the discretion of the committees of the various individual clubs, both racing and trotting, will be much limited. Such a limitation is necessary because, as has been pointed out, racing administrators commonly graduate from the ranks of owners and are not infrequently themselves owners. This, as has been mentioned, has a natural tendency to bias them in favour of owner interests.

184. In the result a tendency has become manifest to prefer those interests to those of other interests involved so that, at least in one instance, the stake of a particular race has been raised to an extravagant sum by a club whose provision for the convenience of its public is distinctly below present-day requirements, and that at a time when that particular club, in common with all others, is asking for a reduction in taxation. The action of this club, in association with other features and circumstances to which our attention has been attracted, dictates that it is unsafe and unwise to allow a condition to continue indefinitely in which the whole of the moneys provided by the public are left at the hazard of a particular interest.

185. It is thought that expenditure by clubs generally could well be made the subject of supervision by an independent authority on which all interests could be fairly represented. This would not involve any interference by the State in the control of the sport of racing. With the constitution and functions of the proposed authority we deal at further length hereafter. Suffice it at this point to say that it might well operate in diverse directions. It might act as an insurance against unwise expenditure and expenditure calculated unfairly to prefer particular interests. It might also ensure that undue accumulations of funds should not be effected or maintained whilst amenities for the public are maintained at a meagre or insufficient level. Such an authority could also ensure, when funds were available and circumstances warranted it, that adequate totalizator facilities would be provided on a scale and in positions sufficient to enable the public to use the facilities with comfort and expedition. It could also secure the provision of sanitary conveniences in sufficiency and in a desirable form, and could provide a means of exercising control over admission charges. Some