

undertaking, promise, or agreement, express or implied, to pay or give thereafter any money . . . on any event, or contingency of or relating to any horse-race, or other race, fight, game, sport, or exercise, . . . or to be engaged in receiving any money under pretence of foretelling future events, or to be engaged in any fraudulent business or undertaking, then the Postmaster-General may, if he think fit, order that no letter, packet, newspaper, or parcel addressed to any such person, either by his own or any fictitious or assumed name, or to any address without a name, shall be either registered or delivered to any such person, . . . and if any letter addressed to any such person be received at any post-office, it shall not be delivered to the person . . . but shall be at once sent to the Dead-letter Office in Melbourne. No money orders shall be issued in favour of any such person, and no money order shall be paid to any such person." Now, he did not profess to be more particular than other people, but, although that class of sport in moderation might not be harmful, he did say that the matter of sweeps at the time that law was passed had become such a public nuisance and curse in Victoria that the Legislature was compelled to take these stringent measures. The columns of the Press teemed with advertisements of sweep promoters, who were no better than swindlers, and worse in every respect than the man who put his hand in your pocket. He did not say that all sweep promoters were so; he knew some established in Sydney who were, he believed, as honourable as any other men. But the system had become so bad, so detrimental to the public morals, that the Legislature was bound to step in. They succeeded in suppressing it. Now, an advertisement was never seen in the papers relating to sweeps, or in the tobacconists' shops such as was formerly seen; and if any one attempted to establish a sweep in Victoria, and letters came through the post to him, or to any assumed name, it was in the power of the Postmaster-General's Department to seize those letters and not to deliver them. That being so, the sweep promoters, with an ingenuity that characterized them, went out of the colony and established their headquarters in Sydney. On their doing so, the then Postmaster-General (Mr. Campbell) took it upon himself to deal with a letter addressed to a person in Sydney sent from a person in Melbourne, under the section of the Act quoted. But their Supreme Court decided that under the section he was not at liberty to proceed against the sweep promoters who had their headquarters in Sydney and dealt with persons in Victoria, and the consequence was that Sydney drew ever so much money from Melbourne every year—probably £100,000 in sweeps alone. Victoria could, no doubt, by altering her own law, deal with the letters going to Sydney in a salutary manner, and they would do that, but he would like to take a broader view of the matter, and this Conference to assert its opinion that all the postal departments throughout Australasia should deal uniformly with matters of this sort. It was a thing that in the best interests of the whole community should be dealt with as a whole, and he did trust that the Conference, without pretending to be straightlaced, and while still having the interest of true sport at heart, as became at any rate two colonies with such splendid racecourses as Randwick and Flemington, and without pretending not to know that large sums of money change hands every year in bets, would still take a stand and say, that when a wholesale system of swindling—for after all that is what it amounts to, though there are exceptions—was attempted to be perpetrated upon the public, who were easily led and easily gulled and have no opportunities apparently of learning any better, it was time for the public departments of the various colonies to interfere and not permit it to be carried on openly in one part of Australia when not permitted in another. He knew what the views of the President were, that they differed from his own; but he wished it to be understood he was not pretending to occupy any higher plane of morality than other men, or to claim for his colony a higher morality than that of others. But he did think emphatically that when a matter of this sort became a public scandal and a nuisance, they ought not to be ashamed or afraid to deal with it from a common-sense point of view; and even though they might be called purists, and hear talk about "grandfatherly legislation," and be told men could take care of themselves, they knew and felt that the public were being hurt, and they ought to interfere. Victoria had done so, and he called upon the other colonies, especially New South Wales, to join her in the matter, and say, "For the good of the people we will not permit this to proceed further."

The Hon. T. Unmack hoped the motion would be unanimously carried. He was thoroughly in favour of it. It was right to put some check upon the evil practices which were encouraged by the facilities given by post-offices. It was not to be expected they would entirely stop gambling, horse-racing, or anything of that kind—they might as well attempt to empty the ocean with a bucket—but they might try to lessen the evil. All knew that through these documents sent through the post-office gambling was directly brought under the notice of thousands of poor youths in offices and warehouses, and the result was that they went into transactions and forgot their sense of honour, and helped themselves to money belonging to their employers. They took the first wrong step, and ultimately it brought about their ruin. He felt they had a direct responsibility to save many of those who were led astray daily through these tempting advertisements and documents forwarded through the post. He had a strong opinion on the subject, and was pleased to hear that Victoria had adopted stringent measures to suppress the gambling spirit. He had done some little himself in checking it, inasmuch as he had introduced a Bill restricting totalisators to racecourses only, for at the time nearly every barber's shop in Brisbane used to lure young fellows into gambling. The result was there was a large amount of defalcation and malpractice in the city, which had now, he was glad to say, to a great extent been checked. Such documents should be stopped—at any rate from going through the post-office. He purposed next session to introduce an amending Act in the Queensland Parliament, and should not omit in it to take notice of these evils.

The Hon. J. G. Ward entirely sympathised with the resolution. At the same time, as a matter of common-sense, they could not overlook that it was impossible to make people virtuous by legislation, and he questioned whether the resolution would in any way remedy the gambling. Victoria at present had the power, and so had New Zealand, of preventing the conveyance of letters for this particular purpose; but if even New South Wales made it illegal for sweeps to be carried on,