

Public Resents Racing Ban

Strong Approval for Broadcasting Company in Giving Results

IT has been very gratifying to the Broadcasting Company to receive from listeners scattered through the whole length of New Zealand such hearty expressions of approval and appreciation as have been tendered in regard to the action taken over the racing ban. The company has been everywhere commended for the stand which it has taken, and what is especially pleasing is the fact that the service given by the company, although restricted, has been highly praised.

In deference to the wishes of the racing authorities, no descriptions of the running of the races were given last week as the races proceeded. The broadcasters confined themselves to the strictly news or information side of the sport. The broadcasts therefore lacked the "entertainment" aspect which pleases and interests non-racing listeners.

A RETROSPECT of the week's racing and its relation to broadcasting would suggest that the ban imposed by the racing authorities has served little purpose other than to exercise a reflex action on racing. Racing does not now get the benefit of entertaining publicity in circles which are not interested in the sport, and these circles are more convinced than ever that there must be something seriously wrong with racing when the racing authorities themselves think that it would be better for racing if as little as possible were said about it. Of course, it is a wrong view for people to take, but it is the view that people who are already not favourably disposed must inevitably take. Suspicions are naturally aroused when publicity is not courted.

When is "News" "News"?

DURING the week preceding the races a lively controversy was carried on between the Broadcasting Company and the Christchurch "Press," which is the journalistic mouthpiece of the racing authorities.

The editor said the Broadcasting Company should not broadcast the results of races against the wishes of the racing authorities. The company retorted that the "Press" published news without asking the consent of the parties concerned. "News is news, and nobody's permission need be asked to publish it," thundered the "Press." To which the company replied that the result of a horse race was "news." The "Press" agreed, and then argued that the company had no more right to broadcast a description of the running of a horse race than it had to broadcast the performance of the opera "Carmen" from a theatre. What would be "news" about "Carmen" would be an account of how the opera was performed, the "Press" said. This was exactly what the company wanted the "Press" to say, and it quickly explained that while the music of "Carmen" could be put on the air, it was not yet possible to run a horse race on a radio carrier wave, and that if a description of Carmen was "news" so was the description of a horse race. In this manner the "Press," though the apologist for the Racing and Trotting Conferences, completely justified the Broadcasting Company for deciding to broadcast the results of races, for "news is news, and nobody's permission need be asked for publishing it."

FINALLY, it need hardly be mentioned that if the racing authorities had imposed a ban on the printing of race results, the "Press" and every other paper in New Zealand would have secured the results and published them, just as the Broadcasting Company has done.

HOSPITAL PATIENTS RESENT RACING BAN

AMONG the correspondence received by the Broadcasting Company last week is one letter that is worthy of special mention. It is signed by 43 of the patients of the Pleasant Valley Sanatorium, Palmerston South. The letter is as follows:—

"The undersigned patients of the above institution wish to thank you for your broadcast, despite handicaps, of the Canterbury Jockey and Trotting Club's races.

"It was with deep regret we heard that the broadcasts were to cease, as perhaps the only pastime of the less able patients has been to endeavour to forecast the races and build castles in the air when our favourites came first.

"Although our comparative seclusion from racing tracks, and our enforced idleness, deprive us of the excitement of 'punting,' there is no more interested an audience in the Dominion than there is in this sanatorium when the racing results come through.

"We all wish to tender our deep acknowledgment for the manner in which the Broadcasting Company is fighting for the sake of those listeners-in who are incapable of fighting for themselves.

"Good luck and more power to your elbow."

TOO MUCH RACING

I HAD to smile this week when I read the report of the discussion by the Auckland Chamber of Commerce on the superfluity of race meetings. It is a very neat example, is it not, of the Race Conference being "hoist with its own petard." The race people, making the thin excuse that they were concerned with the morals of the people, told the world that it was a waste of time to listen to a broadcast description of a race meeting: it was a "frightful" waste of time indeed, and kept people off their work and worried the business men horribly. Therefore, stop the broadcasting! But, lo and behold! these Auckland business men can see a little further than that. "Right," they said, "since you say so, it must be a waste of time. But why stop at broadcasting? Why not stop some of the races and so save more time? Save not only our time from listening, but yours from bothering to go out to the track and train the horses and race the horses. Stop some of the meetings altogether! There are too many of them!" So the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, thanks to the good lead of the Race Conference itself, says there are too many race meetings and we ought to save time by stopping some of them. It did "make me to laugh" to see that. It's logical, any-

way. If the race people are wise, they'll withdraw their ban before they make themselves any more ridiculous than they are, and give some more reasons to the business men for "saving time."—"Funny Old Sport."

Strong Feeling Against Racing Ban.

CONGRATULATIONS to 3YA on the result of the broadcast of the results of the races here during National Week. But how feeble they seemed after the vivid descriptions we have had in the past. We all know who is responsible for this, and I know there is a great deal of feeling in Christchurch about the ban. What I cannot understand, Sir, is why did not 3YA broadcast a running description of the races? They are acting against the wishes of the Conferences in giving the results during the afternoon at all, so why not go the whole hog? The Broadcasting Company have behind them the whole force of public opinion, and that is what counts in an argument of this kind. Good luck to the Broadcasting Company, and may we hear running descriptions of the races in Carnival Week.—A.C.

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