

# Warped Statements made to Justify Racing Ban

## Challenge to Racing Secretary

IN another column there is published the text of a letter addressed by the secretary of the Racing Conference to the secretary of the Wellington Amateur Radio Society in response to the protest of that society and the Hawke's Bay Radio Society against the banning of race descriptions. In this letter certain statements are made which to our mind do not convey the exact truth and we think it due to all concerned to make correcting comment.

There is scarce need to dwell on the weak suggestion of the secretary that back-block settlers and inmates of hospitals will really find it more convenient and enjoyable to dispense with broadcast descriptions of races till the evening when they will be able to receive all the results in one huge mouthful! Frankly, this is pitiable and there is no need to do more than point to the spectacle of the inmates of Palmerston and Waipukurau sanatoriums making earnest petition for the restoration to them of the hours of joy given by the broadcast descriptions. If the members of the Race Conference have any hearts at all, let them but test their own statement by going into such a hospital as Wellington (now equipped with radio) and learn at first-hand how popular their "ban" is. The secretary's suggestion that it would really be better for them to wait till evening strikes one as heartless sarcasm.

### Do the Police Need Nursing?

THE suggestion is revived that the ban is dictated by concern for the alleged inability of the police to cope with illegal betting. The secretary writes, "The Commissioner of Police is reported to have had representations made to him," etc. Does this mean that the ban has been imposed without even troubling to find out whether the police do definitely want the assistance of the racing authorities in carrying out their job? Does not the secretary know definitely where the police stand in the matter? It should be a simple thing to ask the Commissioner precisely what his views are and

whether he considers the police force is incapable of dealing with offences against the law without the need of depriving thousands upon thousands of innocent homes and the sick and maimed in hospital of hours of radio enjoyment? It is this vagueness which led the public from the start to recognise as mere camouflage the suggestion that the racing authorities were in the least concerned with the public morals. That ground was in reality abandoned by the secretary himself when in former correspondence the suggestion was advanced that the attitude of the authorities might change if a little cash were to pass for the privilege of broadcasting! In those circumstances what weight attaches to the reasons advanced by the racing authorities?

### Right to Suppress News?

BUT it is in relation to its claim to control the dissemination of news after the event that we think the secretary of the Racing Conference has, consciously or unconsciously, warped his presentation of the exact position. He says: "The Radio Broadcasting Company . . . claims that the racing clubs have neither the right nor the power to restrict the company in its broadcast of the particulars of their meetings. It would be interesting to know whether your society supports the company in its view that racing clubs have no right or power to control particulars of their own entertainment during the progress thereof."

THIS version is inaccurate in that it omits to cite the circumstances. In first banning broadcast descriptions, the conference intimated that it recommended clubs to afford the Broad-

cast Company facilities equal to those accorded the Press. The facilities accorded the Press include expensive accommodation, telephone facilities for the prompt despatch of news, and immediate use of that news. The outcome of this is that certain newspapers during the progress of important meetings issue special editions and have race news available on the streets only a few minutes after the running of a race. Further, results are posted outside their offices promptly after completion so that the public that is within range of this service secures promptness and efficiency.

But while pretending to give broadcasting facilities equal to the Press, the race authorities would not do so. They imposed as a condition of attendance as their guests, that the telephone was not to be used for the dispatch of news to the studio and that no use was to be made of the news gathered at the course till the evening session.

It was this limitation of facilities, and more particularly the lapse of time, which the Broadcasting Company regarded as unfair and as "a stipulation which the conference has neither the right nor the power to enforce."

### How Far Will They Go?

BY omitting to explain the circumstances in which the Broadcasting Company refused to be bound by the gagging tactics of the Racing Conference, the secretary has been guilty, consciously or unconsciously, of unfairness. He asked the question whether the society supported the Broadcasting Company in its attitude. It is not our place to speak for the society, but we do know that we speak for the great majority of our readers

when we say that listeners are definitely behind the Broadcasting Company in its refusal to be bound by the unfair gag of the racing authorities.

We are quite prepared to turn the tables on the secretary and ask him if his conference seriously claims the right, in a British community—accustomed to freedom and fairness, of suppressing news and its dissemination by one medium while encouraging it on the part of a dozen agents of another medium?

IF they do, let them say so, that we may know how far the Racing Oligarchy presumes to go. Up through the centuries the public has fought for the right to news, hot from the event. Immediately a race is over, the result becomes news, even the events of the race are news, and under the law of the land may be disseminated as such by any medium that an interested party cares to employ.

IT is to the credit of the Broadcasting Company that it has refused to avail itself of the proffered hospitality of the racing authorities so long as the restrictions mentioned apply. Working strictly within its legal rights it has secured news at the earliest opportunity and broadcast it for listeners. Those who wish to bet on this news are at very little disadvantage compared with the actual broadcast; in any event those keenly concerned with the results from the betting point of view secure their news in their own way. All that the ban has done has been to deprive the . . . offensive and unoffending of enjoyment; to add weariness and weight of hours to the sick and afflicted; and to show the public how much its entertainment and goodwill count against a few extra shillings of forced admission money. While neither we nor the Broadcasting Company question the right of the Racing and Trotting Conferences to run their business as they like, we are at liberty to question the wisdom of the reasons advanced for their action; and to resist any effort at oppressive gagging sought to be imposed on the public.

## Struck by Lightning.

### "Southern Cross" Experience.

THE radio outfit on the Southern Cross, with which communication can be obtained with the land while the machine is in flight, is a short-wave receiving and transmitting set, which also operate at 600 metres. There is an aerial for each wavelength. These aerials consist of trailing wires with a weight on each to keep them taut.

As is well known now, the radio operator, Mr. McWilliams, fared badly on the flight. The Southern Cross encountered an electrical storm, and a flash of lightning put both antenna ameters out of action. After working on it for hours, lying on the floor of

the cabin, a torch in one hand, Mr. McWilliams was just about to reassemble the pieces when the aeroplane ran into one of the worst bumps ever experienced, and the loose equipment was scattered everywhere. The operator persisted in his job, and eventually got the set into working order again.

Had it not been for the mishap in the storm the public would have received many more messages from the Southern Cross.

A DUTY of 40 per cent. is charged on radio valves imported into the United States. There is an agitation on foot to reduce this to 30 per cent.

AS a result of the erection of three meteorological stations in Greenland, two days' notice will be given to ships of storms expected to reach the Atlantic Ocean.

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