

Another Reason for the Racing Ban

AT the annual meeting of the Wellington Racing Club, held on September 17, the vice-president, Mr. I. G. Duncan, in the course of his report to the meeting, referred to the ban on broadcast descriptions.

He gave the "main reasons" which weighed with the club's delegates in supporting the ban. His line of argument was somewhat subtle, but quite unconvincing, for people who remember the reasons given by the conferences will now want to know what really are the reasons for the ban.

IT is worth while publishing an extract from Mr. Duncan's statement. The excerpt is as follows:—

"It was felt that owing to the almost complete absence of a leisured class in New Zealand, only a small percentage of listeners-in are in a position to spend a day enjoying the broadcasting of the races from the course. Of this section the vast majority could only listen-in at the expense of their duties and avocations, thus reducing their productive capacity causing friction with their employers and economic loss to the country. In fact, I venture to predict that if the broadcasting of races during the progress of the racing becomes a general practice it will not be long before Parliament, in the interests of the community, will step in and put a stop to the broadcasting of all sporting events until after working hours. But apart from these results, any or all of which would be very damaging to racing, the great bulk of listeners-in would be denied the opportunity of hearing the races broadcast. In the interests of the subscribers to the Broadcasting Company themselves, therefore, it will be seen that the decision of the Racing Conference is a wise one."

MR. DUNCAN does not say a word about bookmakers and illegal betting, about which so much was said by the conferences. Instead, attention is directed to the danger of interfering with the business life of the community. How deep is the concern felt for the business community? The racing authorities do their best to arouse interest in racing, irrespective of whether the public can attend a race meeting and whether the day is a holiday or not. Every means possible—advertisements in the daily papers, the sale of programmes in the streets, posters, special trains and car services—is used to arouse the public, and all are welcomed. Broadcasting alone is criticised and condemned for inciting non-racegoers. As was said concerning the previous arguments advanced by the racing authorities, this argument seems like hypocritical nonsense, especially when read in conjunction with the plea that the ban is in the interests of listeners themselves!

It will be interesting to see what are the next reasons advanced by the racing authorities—perhaps they will yet give their real reasons. So far the reasons given for the "ban" have been:

- (1) The "ban" was imposed to curb illegal betting as promoted by broadcasting, but not of course by the same news posted up outside newspaper offices or published in the Press.
- (2) The privilege of broadcasting should be paid for, although full facilities are given all the members of the Press without charge.
- (3) It is really better for the sick not to have broadcasts in the afternoon when they might have visitors—let 'em wait till the evening.

(4) Broadcasting races encourages people to leave off work to listen, and that is bad for the country. No harm, of course, is done by people leaving off work to attend the races!—it is only the description that is harmful. If the Conference had not banned broadcasting, Parliament would have had to step in to stop the economic disaster!

What will be the next reason advanced?

Racing and Radio.

AS a radio enthusiast first, a sportsman second, and an economic student third, I feel I must reply to Mr. Ian Duncan's explanation regarding the prohibition of the microphone on the racecourse. Whilst I confess I cannot quite understand the reference to a "leisured class" I am quite convinced that the percentage of listeners who appreciate a description of racing events is far in excess of the number Mr. Duncan would have us believe. Further, if listening to a description of races diminishes production and causes an economic loss to the country, how much more so does racing itself? From an economic and productive standpoint racing is the biggest drawback to the country's prosperity. It serves as the means of a gamble, and would not be tolerated by any Government were it not for the taxes derived from same.

To revert back to the productive standpoint, I venture to say that if the broadcasting of racing events is a menace to the productive capacity of New Zealand the attendance at race meetings is ten times more so. Further, if

Parliament were to put a stop to the broadcasting of all sporting events during working hours, in the interests of the community, it must, to be consistent, put a stop to the holding of all sporting events until after working hours.

Mr. Duncan, in his last paragraph says: "These, then, are the reasons which actuated the club's delegates in supporting the resolution of the conference," to which I reply, "This is a weaker excuse than the former one which demanded payment for the privilege." The real reason lays in the desire to obtain facilities for the telegraphing of moneys to the racecourses and if ever that facility is granted, the racing authorities will be only too anxious to have a description of all races broadcast in order that the public might know at the earliest possible moment if their wagers have been successful, and so that they may have time to again play up their winning on the totalisator. The productiveness of the country does not count at all with the racing clubs when a meeting is being held.—Consistent (Wellington).



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AN Australian expert says: "With the possible exception of microphones of the capacity type, no device produced in the last three years has contributed more to the improvement of the quality of broadcast music than the new dynamic cone loud speakers, which first made their appearance more than a year ago in certain electrically operated gramophones and have since been adapted for ordinary broadcast reception. Eliminating alike most of the faults of the horn speaker and earlier forms of cone speakers, the dynamic cone is capable of giving reproduction of a quality which cannot be equalled by any other producing device, and unless some further striking development in wireless reproduction occurs there can be no doubt that this speaker is likely to be in a few years one of the most widely used of all reproducing instruments."

THE Siberian expedition of the American Museum of Natural History, now working in polar waters, is keeping in touch with civilisation through the Vancouver broadcast station CNRV.

A MONUMENT has just been erected on the church spire near Potsdam, which bore the first German aerial, erected by Slaby in 1897.

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