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# Gaming and Betting Amendment Act, 1929.

Appended are two documents, the first being the report of the Betting Control Board established under the provisions of the Gaming and Betting Amendment Act, 1929, and dated 12th November, 1930; and the second a Report made to Government Office by the Chief Constable, on the general subject of Racing at Belle Vue Racecourse.

By Order,

B. E. SARGEAUNT,

Government Secretary.

Government Office,  
Isle of Man,

18th January, 1931.

To His Excellency Sir CLAUDE H. A. HILL, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Lieutenant Governor, and the Honourable the Members of the Council and Keys in Tynwald assembled.

The Betting Control Board constituted under the provisions of the Gaming and Betting Amendment Act, 1929, have the honour to report as follows:—

During the summer season of 1930—June to September inclusive — 21 Race Meetings took place at the Belle Vue Racecourse. Two or more members of the Board were present at each of such meetings. No complaint was made to the Board of any "misdemeanour or malpractice" alleged to have been committed at them by the managers, bookmakers or jockeys, nor was there at any time a demonstration on the part of the public indicating disapproval of or dissatisfaction with any occurrence in the conduct of the races. In one or two instances jockeys were warned, and one was suspended from employment for a short period in consequence of what seemed to the management some breach of propriety in riding.

The proceedings at every meeting were orderly, and from no incidents could it be inferred that deception or dishonesty was being practised by any of those concerned in the conduct of the racing or of the betting taking place at them. As far as the Board could learn there were only very small stakes risked where bets were made.

The races seemed to provide interest and amusement to a large number of people, consisting mostly of visitors to the Island, who appeared thoroughly to enjoy the provision made for them.

We might be allowed to mention that the races, in view of the position of the racecourse, are a considerable source of revenue to the owners of hackney vehicles of all kinds.

12th November, 1930.

C. T. W. HUGHES-GAMES,

Chairman appointed by His Excellency  
the Lieutenant-Governor.

W. F. COWELL,

Nominee of the Board of Agriculture.

WILLIAM MORTON,

Nominee of the Owners of the Belle Vue  
Racecourse.

WM. JAMES CORKILL,

Nominee of the Corporation of Douglas.

C. MOORE,

Nominee of the Parish Commissioners of  
Braddan.

ISLE OF MAN CONSTABULARY.

Chief Constable's Office,

Douglas, Isle of Man,

27th November, 1930.

The Government Secretary,  
Isle of Man.

Sir,

I beg to submit for the information of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor my report on the subject of the Racing at Belle Vue Race Course.

There is no doubt whatever that during the past season, racing was cleaner and of a higher standard than any previous season. This opinion has been expressed by owners, jockeys, bookmakers and the public in general. This state of affairs was no doubt due to the Betting Commission (appointed by Government Office) who were represented at every meeting.

The attendance during the past season averaged about 1,700 persons, which is not as good as previous years, owing to a bad season generally, and is made up as follows: About 15% local persons, 15% owners, jockeys, bookmakers and their followers, and the remainder visitors, there being about the same number of men as women.

There is no doubt whatever that a number of persons visit the Island during the season because of the fact that there is horse racing twice weekly; further, there is no other seaside resort that offers this attraction. Another very popular seaside resort did have horse racing during the season, since the war, but when greyhound racing started, a greyhound track was opened almost on the same site, and during the seasons, six meetings are held weekly, three evening meetings and three afternoon meetings. I should estimate that between 200 and 300 persons visit the Island weekly solely because there is horse racing here, not including owners of horses, bookmakers, jockeys, clerks, and their wives, which number about 100, and are supplemented by their friends on holiday from their respective towns on the mainland. On Tuesdays and Thursdays in the busy part of the season, the Fleetwood boat does not leave Douglas until 6 p.m., and many take advantage of this trip to visit the races. This is supported by the restaurant keepers, who do more business on these days. The type of person who visits the Island solely for horse racing cannot be described as the professional backer, but business men, such as the butcher, baker, hotel-keeper, etc., who, while not betting men, like this sport in a small way.

The average attendance of bookmakers was 30, this being less than previous years. There are five races each meeting, and from observations I should say that on the average the bookmakers hold at least £12 per race or £60 per meeting. This makes £1,800 per meeting, which is a low estimate, but given on a season which was below normal. The larger bets are made by owners and friends, jockey's friends, and bookmaker's followers. There are quite a number of visitors who bet in pounds, but these are the type of person who are not strangers to a racecourse, and know how and when to make a bet. They are usually middle-aged or elderly persons. The average visitor's bet rarely exceeds 5/-, and many visit the course without making a bet.

Whether bookmakers win or lose, they appear to live at the rate of £10 per week, and the owners and their friends spend more money than the ordinary visitor.

The opinions of a number of visitors were obtained during the past season, that is on the Racecourse, and it is suggested that horse racing is a form of attraction and entertainment for visitors. Eight persons said that Belle Vue Race Course was one of the attractions the Isle of Man held for them. Three said they had never seen a horse race before, and one of them, a girl of about 22 years, said she had lost her money and never wanted to see a race again. Others said they came to Belle Vue as there was no where else to go in the afternoon.

I am told there is one complaint which is often voiced on the course, both by owners and the public, and that is the way the bookmakers make their books. A horse may be an even-money favourite at one moment, the next moment it will go out to 3 or 4 to 1, and perhaps more and another horse becomes favourite. In a field of five runners, you may have three different horses taking the place of the favourite. The public cannot grasp this, nor is the owner always satisfied. One cannot blame the bookmaker alone for this state of affairs, but it is suggested that runners between bookmakers, jockeys and owners should be stopped while betting on a race is in progress. I might add the handicapping was said to be exceptionally good, no owner appeared to be satisfied.

I reserve my opinion on the matter of the Totalisator pending another season.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

H. W. MADOC,

Chief Constable.