



CHANGING OF WEIGHT LIMITS. NOT A NEW MEASURE.

DIXON, FITZSIMMONS AND OTHERS RESORTED TO SIMILAR DODGES.

"There has been a lot of shifting in weight classifications since the gloves and Queensberry rules took the place of the raw 'uns and London ring milling," quoth Billy Roche, the veteran American referee and trainer.

"According to the laws laid down by the old Marquis, the ringside scaling for the different grades were:—Bantam, 105; feather, 115; lightweight, 133; welter, 142; middle, 154; and everything above 154 pounds classed as heavyweight material. In the early nineties, Richard K. Fox offered belts for the feather, light, middle and heavy classes, and the men who won and held these trophies were looked upon as bona fide champions. George Dixon secured the feather belt, McAuliffe the lightweight, Dempsey the middle and John L. Sullivan the heavyweight emblem.

Not one of the old-timers who fought for and won these belts by scoring three successive victories in defence of them, kept their property. After Terry McGoorty became featherweight champion he purchased Dixon's old belt in a pawnshop and kept it as a relic. McAuliffe's belt was also pawned, so was Sullivan's, and I don't know what became of them.

SOLD DEMPSEY'S BELT.

"A long time after Jack Dempsey died the middleweight belt fell into Harry Corbett's hands. There was no headstone over poor Dempsey's grave in Oregon, and Harry Corbett raffled off the belt. With the money thus secured Corbett had a stone put over Jack's grave. Then he bought the belt back and gave it to Dempsey's sister, who still owns it.

"There were some great battles fought between feathers in those early days and many of the best were staged by the old California Athletic Club, which was backed by such men as General Miles, Senator Fair, Major McLaughlin, M. H. de Young, John D. Spreckles and scores of other prominent citizens who loved the sport. The club was not run to make money—merely to supply its members with amusement. Purses were hung up and the men told to go and fight for them. That wonderful hard puncher from New Zealand—Billy Murphy—was then in his prime and took part in several spectacular bouts before the organization. It was before the California Club that Billy Murphy defeated Ike Weir in 84 rounds, and Kerrigan and Danny Needham went 102 rounds to a draw.

In 1899, Billy Murphy and Frank Murphy, of England, fought 27 fierce rounds before the same club. Both men broke their hands and were unable to continue. At that time, however, the referee had the power to stop a contest and order it resumed on a later date. So the Murphies were told to come around next day. Billy showed up with his mitts bandaged and spliced with splints, but Frank had had enough and failed to put in an appearance. Murphy also whipped Johnny Griffin, of Braintree, Mass., in three rounds at the California. Griffin was afterwards knocked out by Solly Smith at Roby, Indiana, and George Dixon clinched his title by knocking out Smith, Billy Murphy and beating Griffin.

ORIGINALLY 115 POUNDS.

"Because the bantamweight mark in America is now set at 115 or 116 pounds, most folks have lost sight of the fact that Dixon won the featherweight title by whipping Cal McCarthy at 115, the original feather limit. McCarthy was a graduate from the amateur ranks when he first fought Dixon a 70-round draw in 1890. But Cal was a sure enough marvel of speed and cleverness, and none of the 'pros' had anything on him when he was at his best. Dis-

sipation got him in the long run, and he died a physical wreck, much the same as poor Dixon did at the finish. On March 31, 1891, George Dixon beat McCarthy in 22 rounds for a purse of £7500 and £400 a-side. The side bet was the main thing, generally speaking, in those days, and two-ounce gloves were used, with the battles scheduled to a finish. Pretty soft for our boxers nowadays, eh, when you come to figure out what going it was for the old-timers?

"As I said before, the belts offered were for the feather class up, with welter division overlooked, and there was no trophy offered for the bantams. Spider Kelly, of Harlem, was considered the best bantam, and he was matched with Billy Plimmer, of England at 105 pounds. Plimmer stopped Kelly in a punch, and by so doing made good his claim to the international bantamweight championship.

"But it wasn't long before Plimmer found that it was impossible to get matches at 105 pounds, and as George Dixon, for a similar reason, was compelled to raise the feather limit to 118, and later to 122—Billy boosted the bantam mark to 115. It will be remembered that Jimmy Barry, of Chicago, one of the finest bantams who ever handled the mitts

tained several of the grandest ringsters that ever battled between the ropes, hasn't cut much ice in recent years. It isn't that we haven't got any welters, either, but because there are so many big chaps posing as lightweights, who prefer taking on smaller men, and having an edge on the weights, rather than mix with fellows of their own heft, or maybe have to concede a few ounces."

GENERAL NOTES.

The twenty-rounds' battle in Sydney between Eddie McGoorty and Jeff Smith caused great excitement among boxing followers, and the decision in favour of McGoorty was badly received. This made McGoorty's third conquest in Australia, the crack American welterweight having defeated Dave Smith, Pat Bradley and Jeff Smith, and as he is now on his way to England he is one of the few visiting boxers who have left the Commonwealth without a defeat being entered up against them. Particularly of late years have the visiting boxers met with many unexpected defeats in the Commonwealth, and of these Tommy Burns, Jack Lester, P. O. Curran, Owen Moran and Johnny Summers are recalled to memory at

His most notable defeat was his loss on points of his twelve-rounds' battle with Jimmy Clabby, but it may be mentioned that he had Clabby down twice during that memorable contest, which gives a good idea of his weighty punches. Twice has Dave Smith taken the count in quick time when opposed to McGoorty, while such well-known exponents as Jack Dillon, Tony Caponi, Jack Harrison and Cyclone Johnny Thompson have gone down before his knockout blows. McGoorty has also secured decisions over Frank Klaus and Mike Gibbons.

"Too Much Johnson" is the name of a well-known comedy. Apparently Tommy Burns did not think he had had too much Johnson when he was looking for a featherweight for the Olympia Club (says the Sydney "Sportsman"), for he engaged Lee Johnson, a natty young man of the same brunette complexion as Jack Johnson, Burns' conqueror. It might have been thought that Lee's name and colour would have queered his chances with Tommy.

Word from Sydney states that Hock Keys, the clever lightweight, was discharged from the sanatorium last week, quite restored to health, with the exception of the crushed foot.



THE OPENING SHOOT OF THE PUKEKOHE GUN CLUB.

started in at the old 105 pounds limit, but was obliged to enter the 115-pounds ranks so as to keep busy. It was in this way that the old feather and bantam marks were shifted, and as for the smaller class—the British and Australian boxing authorities have shoved up the scale still higher, making it 118 pounds, weighing in the afternoon of a fight.

FITZ. RAISED LIMIT.

"The middleweight mark remained at 154 pounds ringside until Fitzsimmons beat Dempsey. Then Bob raised it to 158. After Fitz. joined the heavies and Tommy Ryan became middleweight champion, Ryan tried to put the weight back at the old standard, for he could always get well under 154. But, like Plimmer with the bantams and Dixon with the feathers, Ryan found that he would have to go begging for matches unless he fought at a heavier poundage, and he had to let the 158-pound scaling established by Fitz. stand.

Battling Nelson and Ad. Wolgast were the only two lightweight champions who stuck to the 133 ringside ruling, all of the other kings of the roost—McAuliffe, Lavinge, Erne, Gans and the present title-holder, Willie Ritchie—raised the mark a bit. England and Australia now list the lightweight class at 135 pounds. The welter class is now put at 145 pounds, scaling most any old time that looks good to the principals, as against the old standard of 142 ringside. But the welter division, which once con-

the moment. McGoorty thus has earned a distinction which few can boast of, and the probabilities are that had he remained in Australia he would have had his colours lowered also, as he is considered lucky in securing a points' decision over Jeff Smith.

It is unfortunate that McGoorty has left Australia at a time when there appeared every prospect of the world's middleweight championship being definitely settled, for Jimmy Clabby is to arrive in Sydney before Easter, and Clabby, McGoorty and Jeff Smith are acknowledged to be the three whose pretensions to the title are most justified. The triangular dispute could thus have been settled to the satisfaction of all, but McGoorty has shaken the dust of Australia from his feet, and is in quest of bigger game, viz., Georges Carpentier. Should Clabby defeat Jeff Smith at Easter time, the former's claims to the title will receive wide recognition, and a Clabby-McGoorty battle may be staged in the near future, probably in America.

That Eddie McGoorty is a great fighter is the impression that has been formed by all who saw him in action in Australia, and if further evidence were required of his skill it is only necessary to glance down his record, which consists of 83 contests, only two of which have gone against him, while no less than 36 knock-outs are included in his wins.

which, owing to neglect and too early use during the healing process, is still pretty bad. The poor fellow, his own worst enemy, has taken a cottage at Woy Woy, and he's in the company of his wife and children, to complete his recovery. Through the efforts of Mr. W. Powell, who first mooted the matter of temporary assistance to Mrs. Keys and her bairns, a benefit performance is to be given at the Stadium, granted free of all charges, to endeavour to raise sufficient to put the wife and mother in some little business.

Jeff Smith fought up to his very best form against Eddie McGoorty, and in many quarters is considered to be fully entitled to the decision of victor, which honour Referee Arthur Scott conferred upon McGoorty, the announcement being followed by vigorous hooting. Jeff Smith's showing has increased interest in his forthcoming battle with Jimmy Clabby, over whom he gained a points' decision in a 10-rounds bout in America in June, 1911. Jeff Smith also enjoys the distinction of having outpointed the famous George Chip, while he drew in a battle with Mike Gibbons, a strong contender at the time for world's middleweight honours, in a strenuous battle in April, 1912. Another notable match in which he figured was against Georges Carpentier in Paris, when the Frenchman narrowly gained the decision on points after one of the most exciting battles on record.