

Legal and Parliamentary Dept.

Please read this at Union Meetings

Re Gambling, the Hon. S. Smith, Minister of Internal Affairs, writes (1) The Government will not introduce a triennial poll on off-course betting, as it does not consider the views of the people have changed since the last referendum was carried by a large majority. (2) Efforts are being made to stamp out illegal betting, but the collection of evidence is very difficult. (3) He considers that the incidence of gambling is not getting out of hand, but if it appears to do so the Government will consider imposing restrictions. (4) Minors are prohibited by the Gaming Amendment Act 1953, from betting at T.A.B. agencies—not only is the minor liable for prosecution, but the person who sells the ticket, too. The same position applies to race courses. (5) The T.A.B. agency at Waiouru is subject to the same regulations as other agencies. Minors, whether training as territorials or not, are prohibited from betting at the agency, which has been declared out of bounds by the military authorities.

Re Contraceptives, the Hon. Mr Marshall, Minister of Justice, writes that travellers for the two principal brands are given instructions to solicit orders only from chemists, and that the police do not think it common for irresponsible persons to sell contraceptives. Up to December 31st, 1956, six offences were reported, and in one of these the offender was fined £130 for selling contraceptives to children under 16. The police will be glad of any information enabling them to take action. The Minister does not think the limitation of sales to chemists would help. Persons over 16 may lawfully purchase them, and therefore it is immaterial where they are purchased. The real demand comes from married people. Even if only chemists sold them, people could still stock up from chemists for illegal sale.

Note: We think that the answer is not satisfactory. Evidence given to the Commission on Juvenile Delinquency showed this problem to be quite a serious one as far as young people were concerned. It is important that our members get concrete evidence wherever possible.

Re Liquor on Aircraft. The Hon. Mr Shand, Minister in charge of Civil Aviation, writes: N.Z.N.A.C. states that liquor is **not** sold on the Corporation's aircraft. TEAL states that, in view of world-wide practice by international operators, it would be difficult for them to discontinue the sale of liquor on their aircraft, as they think it would be contrary to the wishes of the majority of their passengers. TEAL, however, can refuse to carry any passenger who is intoxicated, while any crew member is liable to summary dismissal in case of drunkenness or use of liquor on duty. No member of the flying staff may consume any alcoholic drink during the period commencing twelve hours prior to undertaking flying duties.

Re Drunken Motorists, the Hon. Mr Goosman, Minister of Transport, writes: Existing legislation provides for a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment or £500 fine, plus one year's disqualification of driver's licence in the case of drunk-in-charge drivers causing bodily injury. Where there is no bodily injury the maximum

penalty is 3 months' imprisonment or £100 fine, plus one year's minimum disqualification. The period of automatic disqualification for drunk-in-charge offences, after the first, was recently increased from 3 to 5 years. The whole matter is to be reviewed again with regard to penalties after discussing with Magistrates. **With regard to blood testing,** the N.Z. Road Safety Council is not satisfied that such a move would be of advantage to this country. The Government is very conscious of the problem of the drinking driver, and every means which is likely to prove of practical value is being explored with a view to ameliorating the gravity of the problem.

Note: The Minister did not comment on other suggestions re urine test. The evidence from this test has just been used for the first time in the Auckland Magistrates' Court, and was instrumental in the conviction of a drunken driver. Why, we ask, should air pilots have to refrain from liquor for 12 hours before flying and motorists be allowed to control a car when the motorist is in such a condition through liquor as to give his car lethal possibilities?

Re Broken Bottles. Since we received a reply from the Minister on this matter it has been interesting to note that nearly 12,000 people have signed a petition urging special legislation to deal with this menace. Two Borough Councils, a Town Council, and 14 County Councils have signed the petition on behalf of 115,000 ratepayers, and the Auckland District St. Johns Ambulance, on behalf of 2,500 members. The petition was sponsored by the Kaitaia and District Progressive Society and has already been presented to the House by the Hon. Mr S. Smith. The Petitioners claim that a large proportion of the glass comes from broken beer bottles. The result will be of great interest to us.

We note the intention of **Mr Boord, M.P.,** to introduce a Bill to establish a Racing Commission to control totalisator permits. At present these permits, which are, in effect, licences to hold race meetings, are controlled by the Minister of Internal Affairs. We hope this will not eventuate. The establishment of the Liquor Control Commission has not helped in reducing facilities for Liquor, and it is likely that the same would apply with regard to the Racing Control Commission. There would, in all probability, be a big increase in racing permits, and already there are too many. It is not a good thing for Cabinet Ministers to shift their responsibilities on to such Commissions, in matters relating to the moral welfare of the people.

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I believe that the drink traffic is one of the greatest evils which curse our land today. Every week that I live, I am more convinced that the political power of the liquor traffic, and the drinking habits of our people, are of the greatest—if not the greatest hindrance in the way of everything that makes for national righteousness and the betterment of the condition of the people.—**The late Viscount Snowden,** Chancellor of the Exchequer.