

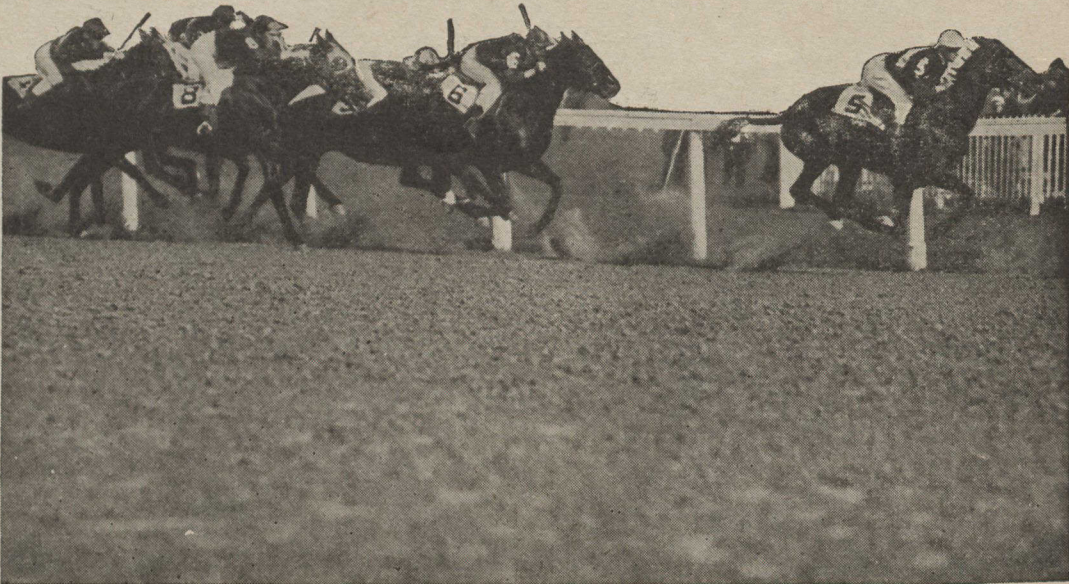
THE FIGHT THAT DEFEATED RACE TRACK GAMBLING

The Most Profitable Business in Canada

By ELIZABETH BECKER



An actual photograph of three typical race track gamblers in the act of "coaxing" their horse past the winning post. This class of men—once thrifty business men—were quickly degraded by race track influence.



Winning the race. A few men would win money, but the vast majority selected the wrong horse, for even the surest tips are untrustworthy. The only certainty about a horse race is its uncertainty.

A GLORIOUS day of tingling, spangling, spring sunshine, a perfect oval of emerald turf and, fluttering here and there like a bevy of early butterflies, an ever increasing crowd of smartly and gaily gowned women and a still larger crowd of men. Old men, young men, middle-aged men, men in the smartest of racing togger, men who look as though they wore a suit only once, but a very long one, men who bear the hall mark of gilded youth, men showing the marks of toil, men with the keen face of the Anglo-Saxon financier, men with the crafty face of the foreign financier, shrewd men with a Yankee drawl, and important personages with the stamp of authority in every movement. Everywhere an air of expectation and of suppressed excitement, until there enters on the scene the reason for it all—a string of thoroughbred race-horses, ridden by jockeys, gorgeous in the colours of the stables they represent. Many exclamations over the good points and the records of the entries are heard; but they are certainly far from beautiful, these gaunt, rangy, long-legged, long pedigreed creatures.

The horses are lined up to the tape, the starter cracks his pistol and they are off, some to a very good start, others wasting time fretting at the nearness of other horses. The field soon strings out, each trying for first place and working up to his best gait; and in a few minutes two have so far outdistanced the others as to have the field practically to themselves. The interest is intense. The crowd on the lawn cheers and the packed grand stand rises as one person to watch every movement of the flying horses. Finally a head shoots under the tape half a length ahead of the horse he has raced, side by side, for the last half mile. The audience goes mad with excitement, cheering the winner to the echo as he skims along. The horses are trotted back at a leisurely pace; the jockeys slip off to be weighed, and the horses, carefully blanketed, are led away looking like the weary steeds of the ancient crusaders, who went forth, not to win a race, but to rescue a nation.

This was the original race meet; a gathering of sportsmen and their friends to see the races

run for varying purses and cups put up by equine admirers; but the greed of commercialized sport, that pollutes all it touches and sees in a horse race only a means of getting easy money from dupes, degraded this once legitimate amusement until it became so serious a menace to the morals of the people, that those awake to its blighting influence, secured action to prohibit the gambling that had become the chief feature of the races—a prohibition that is in force only for the duration of the war.

The fight is against the gambling and not against the sport. The race track and the jockey club were known in Greece 2,500 years ago, and for over twenty centuries the Arab has given a loving care to his horse that is usually bestowed only on human beings, while in England and America the sport has flourished for more than two hundred years; and yet the promoters of the races state, in all seriousness, that without betting, either with book-men or the betting machine, the race course and the thoroughbred would soon disappear.

Horse Racing an Old Amusement

Germany has long been notorious for its lotteries and its other forms of gambling. With their usual thoroughness in making everything profitable, even vice, their race tracks are

public institutions, under state regulation. In 1911, the betting machines took in seven and a half million dollars, of which the State took one-sixth as a tax. Both horse racing and gambling have for many years flourished in France, and finding it necessary to regulate the gambling, the Pari-Mutuel system of betting was established there in 1891. This system replaced the disreputable system of book-making on the

majority of Canadian tracks.

Nor is horse racing a new thing in America. In South Carolina, one hundred and twenty-five years ago, race week was a great event, and it was quite without the vices of the races of to-day. Dr. Irving, the secretary of the famous South Carolina Jockey Club, describes the occasion thus: "The best idea we can give of the moral influence of race week is to state that the courts of justice used daily to adjourn and all schools were regularly let out as the hour for starting the horses drew near; with one consent the stores in Broad and King

Streets were closed; in fact, it was no uncommon sight to see the most venerable and distinguished dignitaries of the land, clergymen and judges, side by side on the course, taking a deep interest in the animated scene around them."

While betting is not new in America, the book-maker was unknown until about thirty years ago in the United States. His rise and

fall have taken place in this time, and now Maryland and Kentucky are the only States of the Union that permit this form of gambling.

If we believe, with Matthew Arnold, that the aim of all true education is to help men to see clear and think straight, "then," said Mr. W. E. Raney, K.C., who appeared in support of the Miller Bill before the House of Commons in 1910, "a law that makes a given act lawful here and to-day, and criminal elsewhere and at another time, will not help men to see clear and think straight. Such a law confuses ideas of right and wrong and tends toward mental and moral anarchy. It causes the average man to inquire, as did the York County Grand Jury in 1909:

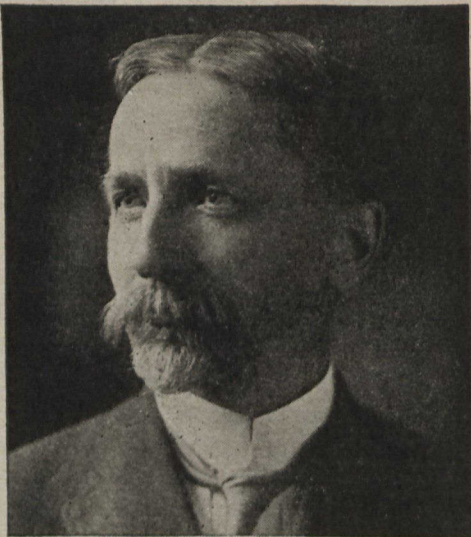
"Why is it any more wrong to place a bet in a cigar store than on a race track? Is it because fashionable society are the offenders oft-times there, or is it because the wealth represented in these institutions has terror for the law-makers?"

"When we learn of the dishonesty, the hardship, that comes on many a home through the folly of the father or mother, the disgrace which follows many a young person's get-rich-quick efforts; when, worst of all, we awaken to the tolerance of public opinion to institutions which have so outraged public sentiment in other countries that they have completely prohibited them, we fear not only for the good name of our fair country, but for the moral honesty, without which no nation can maintain her prosperity and her safety."

The Outlaws Enter Canada

Canada has always rather prided herself on maintaining a higher moral tone than some of her neighbours, but while she was thanking the Lord that she was not as other nations, unjust, usurers, and gamblers, the enemy had accomplished her downfall. In 1894 the States of New York and Michigan enacted legislation prohibiting the business of race track gambling. Driven out of these states, the neighbouring country where no such law existed presented a convenient and safe harbour for all pirate gamblers who chose to prey on her people, and in 1895 the race tracks at Fort Erie and Windsor were estab-

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Mr. W. E. Raney, who fought the race track gambling, tooth and nail.



A line of gamblers waiting to place bets. Each is certain he is now going to make his everlasting fortune.



Operating the pari-mutuel machine. These machines registered the bets and were regulated by the Government.