



Last week reference was made in this column to the question of the lacrosse championship. A few words more may be appended appropriately. They are in relation to the much vexed question of jurisdiction. In the old days there was no such difficulty, but every improvement seems fated to be hampered by a corresponding drawback. With the impetus that the formation of the senior league gave to lacrosse, it was thought that all obstacles had been swept out of the way, but experience has proven otherwise. When the agreement was signed for the first time there was not a dissenting voice as to the propriety of leaving all disputes to the executive of the C. A. A. A. It was recognized, of course, that that eminent body was somewhat dilatory in its deliberations and its judgments; but as that had been one of the organization's most marked characteristics from the time of its inception, no one wondered. At the second meeting of delegates, last year, the change in sentiment was most marked, and when it came to making out the agreement there was a very well developed and able-bodied "kick." The majority of the delegates did not see why the C. A. A. A. should legislate for them in matters pertaining purely to lacrosse. They wanted to do their own legislating, and accordingly voted that all disputes be left in the hands of the council composed of the delegates of the five clubs in the league. Here was one of the few cases on record where the minority carried their point. The Cornwall, Shamrock and Ottawa delegates voted in favour of what might be called self-government in lacrosse matters. Toronto and Montreal took the opposite view, and still wanted disputed questions settled by the C. A. A. A. It will be remembered that on the first vote it was decided to have all difficulties settled by the lacrosse men themselves, but at this point the Montreal club put a most effective damper on the proceedings by resigning from the league, and it was plainly understood that Toronto would do likewise, if the first year's agreement was not adhered to. This left the other three clubs in a very peculiar position. Their delegates recognized the fact that without Montreal and Toronto in the race there would be comparatively little interest in any series that might be arranged, either from a sporting or a financial point of view. The objectionable motion was withdrawn, and for once in a dog's age the minority beat the majority.

Was this decision a wise one or not, may only be answered when its effects are considered. There is not a doubt in the world that the gentlemen engaged in the discussion did what they considered best when they cast their votes making the C. A. A. A. the arbiter of their little disagreements. Subsequent events, however, have shown that the best laid plans of lacrosse folks, as well as other men, often go the wrong way. The history of last year's bickerings need not be recapitulated. There is nothing in it to be particularly proud of, but it proved one thing very conclusively, and that was that lacrosse men should legislate for lacrosse men. The C. A. A. A. may have recognized the fact that art is long, but they certainly appeared totally oblivious to the other part of the saying, that time is fleeting. In such a matter as the settling of a lacrosse dispute time is about as important a constituent as water is in the make-up of a river, and a waste of it is not calculated to improve the temper of the clubs interested, especially as the national game is not practicable for thirteen months out of the twelve. The Cornwall club was the particular sufferer, and an impartial mind will say it was hardly dealt with, though it will be acknowledged that it was rather the victim of circumstances than of any intention to treat the club unfairly; but "Men are the sport of circumstances when Circumstances seem the sport of men."

It was simply one of the results of having what was supposed to be a perfectly impartial committee legislate on a subject with which it was only partially acquainted. Good, dear-natured soul! it took its time; it had all the year before it, and, like all good-natured people who procrastinate, when the annual meeting came along it discovered that it knew about as much of the question in hand as

one of Stanley's pigmies knows about ice cream, or an Eskimo about pomegranates. After keeping the unfortunate Cornwallites on the gridiron for the greater part of the season, and letting the daily press do the "turning," with an occasional prod of the fork to see that the sufferer was being well done, the executive committee decided to do something—in this case "something" is synonymous with "nothing"—and so the matter was handed over to the new committee, which immediately set to work, and, with an ardor that on most occasions would have been admirable, decreed that one of Cornwall's players was a professional. And this decree carried with it, by implication, the decision that Cornwall could not claim what is usually called the championship.

Now, I do not doubt for a moment that Leroux was a professional, at least in a technical sense; but I do assert that the Cornwall club was treated unfafully. The charge was made early in the season, but the case was not brought to trial for months, and during all this time the Factory Town club stood ready to defend their man, but a chance was not given. When the verdict did come, it was impossible to rectify the position of affairs, and Cornwall was the victim. It was like hanging a man first and getting a conviction against him afterwards. The result was that although Cornwall was entitled to the trophy it did not get it, a sort of stultifying resolution, to the effect that there was no championship for 1890, doing the business. If anything like expedition had been used the result would most likely have been different, as the Cornwallites would certainly not have played the protested man, and his loss would not have been a great one to the team. This case is simply used as an illustration of the fallacy that the senior club delegates fell into when the C. A. A. A. was made the final judge in these matters. It is all very well to say that the C. A. A. A. is the only unprejudiced body to which appeal may be made. A very brief analysis will convince anybody conversant with athletic sports that this most potent, grave and reverend body may, under the pressure of certain circumstances, be anything but impartial; and the question following in natural sequence is: Can we not do better than leave these things to the C. A. A. A.? I think so. Leave the matter in the hands of the men who represent the clubs interested. It may be said that they also will be prejudiced; possibly, but they would be forced to act immediately, and even suppose they were a little mite partial—well, have the council of the C. A. A. A. been absolutely free from the taint recently? Of the two evils we naturally take the lesser. The N. A. L. A. can only legislate for three clubs in the senior league, while Toronto and Cornwall are under the ægis of the C. L. A. Here again would be a very marked difficulty to get over. The C. A. A. A. might be a very useful factor in this matter if experience had not taught us that in cases of necessity it was about as active as a plume on a hearse, and then it nodded the way the wind blew. The senior league, as it stands, recognizes the playing rules of the N. A. L. A. and the time system of the C. L. A. Why not give to its committee of delegates the power to adjudicate in cases of dispute. There will never be unanimity as to the respective merits of the Eastern and Western association, and there will always be dissatisfaction with the manner of working the C. A. A. A. adopted in recent years. There seems only one feasible way out of the difficulty—make your own rules, live up to them, and see that your committee enforces them.

The possibilities in the trotting arena during the coming summer are more attractive than usual, especially in the vicinity of Montreal. Trotting during the last few meetings and during the old regime are two entirely different things. Everything is not, by any means, perfect yet, but the improvements have been great, and as the right spirit seems to be actuating the proprietors of tracks, even better things may be looked for. The opening meeting will be at the Blue Bonnet track, which has recently fallen into the hands of new lessees, and if energy and go count for anything good sport may be looked for. Two thousand dollars will be given in prizes, and it is expected that the Provincial Government will be again heard from in the way of encouraging home-bred stock. Lepine park will hold its meeting a few days later in June, and here again \$3,000 will be hung out. These two meetings ought to be attraction enough for owners, especially as they come so close together that there will scarcely be any necessity to move horses. As these two meetings will be held under

the rules of the National Trotting Association, it may fairly be expected to find sport worth going to see. In a chat with a most enthusiastic horseman the other day, he let fall a couple of wise hints, much to the following effect: "It is all very well, said he, "to have your trotting races under National Association rules, but the great difficulty is, with all the best intentions in the world, it is a most difficult job to fill the judge's stand as it should be filled. The men who know the rules and how to enforce them are very few, indeed, and the majority of these will not officiate. The result is that, to a greater or less extent, at our trotting meetings the judge's stand is occupied by gentlemen who, no doubt, are honest and well-intentioned, but whose absolute knowledge of the niceties of the law are very vague. Good intentions and strict probity are indispensable in their way, but are really of small account if not backed up by a thorough knowledge of all the technicalities of the track. The remedy suggested, too, is one of comparatively easy accomplishment. When a date is claimed by any track it is recorded in the books of the National Association. Why not, when making application for dates, at the same time make a small deposit, sufficient to cover the expenses of the three men whom the association might appoint as judges. These gentlemen could be depended on as being perfectly competent, and would certainly be as impartial as anybody else. The outlay would be comparatively small, and would be money well spent if we take into consideration the effect such a course would have on public opinion. It would do more to restore confidence than perhaps any other method, and as all the Association tracks would naturally have different dates the judges could make the circuit. By this means the judges would become recognized as, to a certain extent, public men, whom one would expect to find at all the trotting meetings, and whose position would be such that they could not afford to do anything shady. With a certainty of fair races and fair judging, it would be surprising to see how soon the number of spectators would be recorded in the thousands instead of the dozens, as is now the case. Suppose the new management of the Blue Bonnets track were to make the initial effort in this direction. It would do a lot of good to our local trotting tracks, and they would not be out of pocket over the result, either."

I am a person of an inquisitive turn of mind and, like the man whose misfortunes centered round the Circumlocution office, I would occasionally want to know you know. I saw a nice looking medal in a window the other day and it bore a legend about champion of the world for skating. Who is this new champion of the world and where did he get the title from? Is it in earnest, and how many champions are we going to have, or is it a cruel joke perpetrated on a confiding public? But then I have heard that they do strange things in Ottawa occasionally.

The Canadian Skating Association may have done a very prudent thing when its council concluded not to hold any figure skating championship competition this year; but it is very questionable whether it was altogether acceptable to the people who take any sort of interest in those matters. When associations undertake to legislate for any particular branch of sport, and are recognized as the authority in such branch, then they have a right to hold such annual championships as their bye-laws call for. We all know the circumstances that balanced the Canadian Association and made it extremely difficult to follow out its programme. Still I cannot help thinking that even a nominal competition, with no foreign contestants, would have been much better than none at all. However, it is too late now to cry over spilled milk.

The Toronto Football League is one of the most thriving athletic organizations in the country, and this fact was brought out at the annual meeting, when nine clubs were represented. The principal feature of the meeting was the discussion of deliberate fouling the ball in defence of the goal, and the following resolution was passed:

"This meeting is of opinion that legislation is desirable for the following offences, viz.: Handing the ball, holding or tripping within twelve yards of goal, and respectfully asks the Western Football Association to consider the same."

An effort will be made to bring about a meeting of the junior champions of Toronto and of the Western Association.