

antee, and perhaps improve, the standard of racing in Maryland and place racing in this State on a favorable competitive base with racing in New York, New Jersey, Delaware and West Virginia.

The proposal met with the combined opposition of Baltimore legislators, who reported overwhelming sentiment in the city against the removal of Pimlico, and other racing interests.

Legislative discussion of the matter developed the proposal of additional racing days for the Laurel and Bowie tracks, both located in the Baltimore-Washington perimeter, as a possible offset to a threatened decline in racing revenues to the State.

Since the safeguarding of revenues from racing, so long as the State is dependent upon this source of revenues, is a primary consideration in the licensing of pari-mutuel betting on this sport in Maryland, additional days of racing at the mile tracks in a locality which would draw both Baltimore and Washington patronage appeared to be the simplest alternative approach to an assurance of continued revenue, which was the underlying interest of the State in the proposal to consolidate the Pimlico-Laurel operation at an expanded and modernized track. For that reason, I suggested its further consideration by the General Assembly.

However, the measure as finally enacted deprives the Racing Commission of any discretion in the matter of the twenty additional days authorized, and makes it mandatory that ten each be added to the meets at Laurel and Bowie, regardless of whether the returns from a hundred days of racing at mile tracks are maintained at a level commensurate with the State's dependence on this source of revenue. This would constitute a basic change in policy.

As presently written, the law authorizing pari-mutuel racing in Maryland vests the Commission with discretion in the assignment of racing dates to licensees, and in this discretion is a measure of protection for the State's interests.

The net increase of thirty authorized days of racing (twenty days mile tracks; ten additional half-mile days), plus the extra five days that would be permitted the three harness tracks which will operate this year, presents complications in the assignment of dates which were not foreseen in all their implications at the time of the consideration of this legislation by the General Assembly.

Years of experience have established the impracticability of racing in Maryland during the months of December, January, February and March, covering a period of a hundred and twenty-one days. In the remaining two hundred and forty-four