

No. 14

(Senate Joint Resolution 15)

Senate Joint Resolution requesting a complete and definitive study of the State's policy on racing.

At the 1958 Session of the General Assembly, this body again has been called upon to take action on a bill which would permit the closing of Pimlico Race Track and eliminate this track as a site for future racing in Maryland. Other bills on the subject of racing also have either been introduced or discussed as possibilities for introduction at this Session. In the aggregate they spell out very clearly a conclusion which already has been crystal clear. It is that the General Assembly and the remainder of the State have serious need for a thorough, intensive, definitive and constructive study of the present status of racing in Maryland and of its future possibilities and potentialities.

Mention of only a few factors in this situation emphasize this conclusion. In the first place, it may well be that the State has permitted an over-development of racing days. We have now licensed mile-tracks for a total of 120 days, half-mile tracks for a total of 72 days, harness tracks for a total of 96 days and steeplechase racing for 2 days. These figures add to the amazing total of 290 days of racing annually. If allowance is made for 52 Sundays and Good Friday, only 22 week days are without racing during the year.

States surrounding Maryland are busily engaged in expanding their own racing possibilities. The State of Virginia which has never had racing is considering authorizing it. A new track is planned at Charleston, West Virginia. The Ocean Downs Track on the Eastern Shore is meeting very serious competition from Brandywine. For years, of course, the tracks in other nearby states have been active and serious competitors of Maryland.

In attempting to get away from active competition, Maryland has begun to license racing from early February to late December. Serious difficulties from weather have occurred twice within the past few months.

Particular urgency is given to the whole question because of its importance as a source for valuable State tax revenues. Questions which need discussion and solution are such as the possible merging of the mile tracks, the possible closing of marginal race tracks and even perhaps the possible State operation of racing.

Without a doubt, the State of Maryland very badly needs a complete study of the entire subject of racing; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the General Assembly of Maryland, That the Legislative Council be requested to appoint a committee which will make a complete, intensive, and definitive study of the subject of racing

EXPLANATION: *Italics indicate new matter added to existing law.*

[Brackets] indicate matter stricken from existing law.

CAPITALS indicate amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken out of bill.