

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 2015

JUMPS RACING

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. L.W.K. Bignell:

That this house establish a select committee to inquire into and report on jumps racing in South Australia, and in particular:

- (a) whether or not it should be banned ; and
- (b) any related matters.

(Continued from 4 June 2015).

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:43): This motion, as presented, states:

That this house establish a select committee to inquire into and report on jumps racing in South Australia, and in particular:

- (a) whether or not it should be banned; and
- (b) any related matters.

I would like to speak in favour of the amendment of the member for Chaffey which reads:

That this house establish a select committee to inquire into and report on jumps racing in South Australia and in particular:

- (a) the future of jumps racing in South Australia; and
- (b) any related matters.

I think that is a far better and a more well-rounded approach to looking at any issue in this place. To put up a select committee with the pretence of whether or not it should be banned, I think is getting more than one step ahead of yourself. I think that you need to go into any select or standing committee with open eyes and open views. Part of our job here in the parliament is to take all views on board. I know from my experience on different select and standing committees that that is exactly what people do right throughout this place, whether they are from one of the major parties, one of the minor parties or an Independent, and certainly in discussions about racing.

The fatality rate over the last 12 years for jumps racing averaged 0.64 per cent and 0.48 per cent for flat racing; so not a significant difference at all, particularly in regard to the fact that the figure for flat racing does not include trials or track work, whereas the figure for jumps racing does include trials. There has not been a fatality in racing since August 2012, but one horse was lost in a trial in that period. Thoroughbred Racing in South Australia has received correspondence from people critical of the sport, but we on this side of the place

have certainly received online petitions, written petitions, letters and emails signed by a very large number South Australians who support the sport.

In terms of industry data, the last three jumping seasons at Morphettville had an increase of 60 per cent for starters and jumping trials. The total South Australian trained starters in trials increased by 109 per cent. Total starters in jumping races increased by 15.7 per cent between the 2013 and 2014 jumping season, and total South Australian trained starters increased by 49 per cent. The average starter numbers in jumps races in the 2014 season was 8.15 compared with flat events at 7.0 average field size in all listed events, 8.0 in all non- maiden two year olds, 8.2 benchmark, and 9.0 and 8.4 on three-year-old racing. It certainly shows that there has been plenty of interest in racehorses and jumps racing from people involved in the racing industry.

The total prize money won by South Australian trained horses in jumps races as a percentage has increased from 10 per cent in 2012 to 16.21 per cent in 2013 and 22.2 per cent in 2014. That again shows there has been a general increase in prize money. Prize money won by South Australian trained horses in group 1 flat races is 7 per cent.

The average attendance at Morphettville was 1,291 compared with 868 on days without a jumps racing event. Excluding Irish Day from the comparison, the average attendance on other days with a jumping event was 1,002. It is noted that Irish Day is the third or fourth best attended day for the South Australian Jockey Club—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes—next to the Adelaide Cup and Melbourne Cup. Of the 10 best attended events in the winter season, six had a jumping event on the day. In regard to on-course turnover for those days with a jumps race, the average turnover for 2014 was \$176,000 compared to \$137,000 for those days that did not run a jumps race. The average off-course turnover for those days with a jumps race was \$604,000 compared with \$595,000 for those days without a jumps race. Therefore, in terms of turnover both on and off course, the industry will be disadvantaged if jumps racing ceases to exist. An additional 18 trainers were accredited in 2014 to train jumps horses.

Obviously, we are well aware of Oakbank over the Easter period. It is a huge contributor to the local economy which generates around \$11 million to \$13 million annually, and the average attendance over the last three years has been 68,000 people. It is a struggle, it seems, to get an average of 8,500 to the Adelaide Cup, so you can just see the difference there.

In regard to animal activists, they are targeting racing not simply in relation to jumps racing but in relation to issues like heat stress, the use of the whip, two-year-old racing and what they describe as 'wastage'. It is certainly something to note in this time of increased unemployment in this state and throughout the regions that the racing industry is a significant employer, employing in excess of 3,500 full-time equivalents.

I note that, certainly in my electorate, there are some jumps races held at Murray Bridge, and many people take advantage of going to the races on those

days. As people can see and hear from my comments, the interest in jumps racing in the last few years has only increased, so I certainly think that we should not be going into this select committee with preconceived ideas as to whether or not jumps racing should be banned. I think we need to go in with an open view and be more cogent in what we are thinking here.

I think that, in looking at the future of jumps racing in South Australia, instead of having preconceived ideas as to whether it is to be banned or not, there is a much better way, and I hope that is where we go with this committee. I certainly believe that you will have witnesses coming to the committee who will think, 'Wow, here is an opportunity. We can really spruik up the issue around banning jumps racing without having that better overall view of the world in regard to racing.'

Certainly, as the member for Morphett indicated, horses can break their leg just running around a paddock. I heard news the other day that my father lost one of his best draught horses, Old Fuego. He was just struck by lightning, so he had no chance. Certainly, there are occasionally accidents, but things can happen to any animal running around a paddock. It certainly does happen to horses, and it is not a nice thing to witness at any time.

With those few words, I commend the amendment. I just want to see that we have a better overall view of the industry instead of going in with what the minister has, which is a very biased view. He is going into this committee looking—

The Hon. L.W.K. Bignell interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We are trying to finish this one off, thank you.

Mr PEDERICK: He has put up this committee, and he has made many comments in the media that jumps racing should be banned. I certainly do not think that is the tack that a racing minister should be going down.