

of ninety-nine years it took it on the best terms it could get. The ground is let for grazing purposes at £40 a year, so the club is losing the difference between that sum and the rent during the balance of the lease if it does not get a permit. The grounds are in fair order, but a fair amount of money will be necessary to put the buildings in order, and this will be done if a permit is granted.

ASHHURST-POHANGINA RACING CLUB.

The headquarters of the club are at Ashhurst. The club was formed in 1891, and is registered. The last meeting was held on the 29th December, 1910. A list of the present members of the club and a copy of the last balance-sheet have been forwarded. The membership of the club at the time that the permit was taken away stood at 144, and can again be brought to this financial strength on the club being reinstated. The racecourse consists of 40 acres of freehold and 15 acres of reserve, 2 acres of the latter, forming part of the track, being held on a twenty-one-years lease from His Excellency the Governor. The circumference of the course proper is 8 furlongs less 50 yards. The accommodation consists of a grandstand, 108 ft. by 30 ft., with dining-rooms for public and officials, publican's bar, kitchen and pantry; ladies' room underneath; officials' building (two-storied); jockeys' room and handicapper's room; secretary's room on ground floor, and rooms for Press and stewards, with balcony overhead; totalizator-house to accommodate four machines; judge's box fitted with number-board; and stables consisting of fifteen stall and loose boxes. Connected with the stables are necessary urinals. The club's course proper is fenced on the inside. The training-track and ploughed gallop are fenced on the inside. The nearest clubs using the totalizator are Awapuni, twelve miles distant, and Woodville, ten miles distant. The nearest club not using the totalizator is Pahiatua, twenty miles distant. We would like to point out that the club held a license for twenty-one years, but the same was withdrawn as a result of the 1910 gaming legislation. The club was the leading one-day club of the Dominion. The racecourse being adjacent to the railway makes it most convenient for owners, trainers, and the sporting fraternity. The course and the grounds are used as a recreation-ground by various sporting bodies, and the non-reinstatement of the club would mean the loss of public grounds. Mr. Hunter's Bill was passed primarily to relieve clubs situated in our position. Six horses are being trained on our tracks at the present time.

By the Deputation.—Our district extends between forty and fifty miles in a northerly direction, and nearly everybody in this closely settled area is interested in this racing club. As soon as the club was passed out of existence the great majority of the settlers ceased to take any interest in racing, because they are practically cut off from any other racing centre. The course and appointments here show, we think, that the people of this small district are alive to the interests of sport. These improvements have all been provided out of the pockets of the people of this small district. This is a country club in the truest sense of the word, and it gave the biggest stakes possible in order to encourage the breed of horses. It occupied a prominent position in New Zealand for its stakes. It also established a classic race, the Ashhurst Guineas, which did a tremendous lot of good not only to this district, but to the whole coast. That one race did a vast amount of good in encouraging the breed of horses. There was scarcely a man who did not have a good mare for breeding purposes. This is a freehold course. There is a small overdraft of £500 with the bank, and we think it is a pity we should lose our freehold property after all the time and money spent on it. If we do not get a permit we cannot keep the course. We cannot let the property without destroying our buildings and improvements. If we sell, the town will lose this ground for picnics and sports gatherings. We have paid on an average something like £1,250 in stakes per day for many years. It is out of the question for settlers and their families who live eighteen or twenty miles away to go to Palmerston or Feilding for a day's sport. We claim to be the premier hack club of the Dominion, and we think it is generally acknowledged that the finding of the previous Commission came as a surprise to all disinterested parties. Our lease from the Crown has fourteen years to go. We recognize that the course slopes outwards in some places, and it is our intention to rectify that at the turn.

PAHIATUA RACING CLUB.

The headquarters of the club are at Pahiatua. It was formed on the 3rd June, 1891, and is registered. The last meeting was held on the 13th May, 1914, without a totalizator. A list of the present members of the club and a copy of the last balance-sheet have been forwarded. The course is 1 mile 3 chains in circumference, 22 yards in width, banked on turns, with a straight of a quarter of a mile in length. The tenure is freehold. The accommodation consists of a grandstand, small stewards' stand, ladies' cloak-room and lavatories; jockeys', Press, weighing, and secretary's rooms; dining-room, publican's booth, and kitchen; there is a raised terrace in front of the stand; horse-stalls; water-closets and urinals inside, also outside enclosure; judge's box, and totalizator-house. The course is all fenced inside and outside. There is also a training-track which is half a chain in width. The nearest clubs using the totalizator are Woodville, thirteen miles distant, and Masterton, forty miles. We would point out that the population of the Pahiatua district, county and town, taken with the adjoining counties of Akitio, Eketahuna, town and county, and Alfredton, is 10,124. This district is known as the Forty-mile Bush, and is without a totalizator permit. It was all dense heavy bush, and is settled by small settlers who cannot afford to lose the time to go a distance for a day's sport. As Pahiatua is centrally situated, with an up-to-date racecourse and appointments, it would give these settlers a day's racing if the club had one of its days restored. Our club had two days with a totalizator permit. We gave £1,150 in stakes. We had 327 nominations from horse-owners for our last totalizator meeting, showing our popularity with horse-owners. We have expended £3,390 on the course and appointments.