

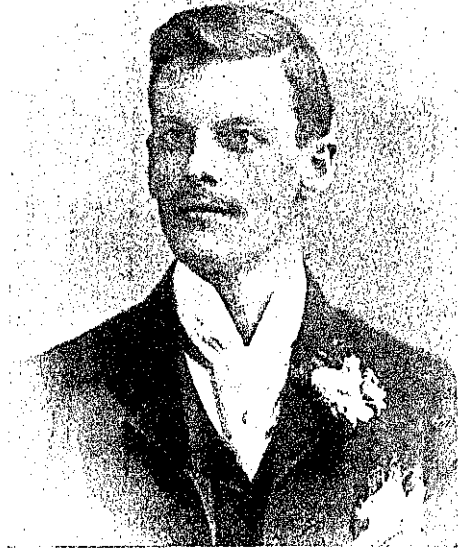
tested right up to the finish, and as the New South Welshmen were the favourites, it was a great triumph for the New Zealanders, who were all in good form and condition, to win the first Intercolonial match by the handsome margin of 18 sets to 10, and New South Wales having defeated both Victoria and Queensland, New Zealand's title to the Intercolonial Championship of 1896 was undoubted.

While in Sydney I had the pleasure of meeting S. F. Diddams, an old Auckland boy, who has done very well at lawn tennis over the other side. Diddams, who represented Victoria at this Tournament, is a good single player, without being of quite first class rank, but in doubles his skill is unquestioned. In company with Dunlop he has represented Victoria on many occasions, almost always with success, and this pair has just succeeded in winning the Doubles Championship of Victoria in three consecutive years, which is a record for that colony. If Diddams has a fault, it is that he occasionally "poaches" shots that might fairly be considered his partners. It is a pity that Diddams was induced to leave this colony, as a performer of his calibre would have greatly strengthened the ranks of New Zealand players.

We learnt many useful wrinkles in style and methods of play, both in singles and doubles, while in Sydney, but unfortunately space will not permit me to discuss them.

In my opinion the Championship Meeting at Nelson, in 1896, was the finest that has ever been held in the colony. The "Brook" courts were absolutely perfect, while the appointments and arrangements for the visitors were excellent. In a small town like Nelson the players live closer together, and there is, therefore, more opportunity of discussing tactics, and fighting old battles again, and this feature is an important factor in the enjoyment of a tournament. There are, of course, corresponding drawbacks such as the ludicrous efforts at reporting, and while speaking of this, I really must quote some tit-bits from the account of the final of the Doubles which appeared in a Nelson paper. The paragraph runs as follows: "Both couples appeared very fit, and the

match resolved itself into an Inter-provincial contest, Wellington v. Canterbury. In the first set the Wellington pair led off strongly with 5-2, the two games to Canterbury being the result of *long reaching* (sic!) by Styche and *effective sweeping corner returns* by Cox. Parker led off in the second set, beating Cox with a fast serve and *puzzling Styche with a big break!* He and Gore soon won the first game, Styche winning the second game of this set chiefly owing to some *loose, fast play* by Gore. The fourth game saw some *fancy net work* between Parker



STANLEY F. DIDDAMS.

and Styche, whilst Gore and Cox contented themselves with (oh, shade of Renshaw!) *back play at the touch line!*"

To comment upon this production is unnecessary. It would be amusing to anyone to notice the curious jumble of horse racing, cricket, football and lawn tennis (?) the reporter has evolved, while to a lawn tennis player its unconscious humour is delicious.

All the best players in the colony were present, and took part in the Singles, with the exception of Collins, who unfortunately sprained his ankle in practice, and had to