

vouring to find excuses but rather the reason, for Ponsonby's defeat, and on Saturday they were as palpable as the proverbial pikestaff. In the first place, Ponsonby were hopelessly beaten in the line-out play. Secondly, their two centre forwards were unable to secure the ball in the scrums; and in the third place, their four three-quarters were played too near the scrum, which fact gave too much work to their fullback. The Ponsonby team should have no great difficulty in overcoming these three defects, and had they not existed on Saturday the Parnell-Ponsonby contest might have borne a different complexion, for in tackling, kicking and passing the players of the Western suburb at least held their own.

For the winners Billy Elliott again proved the greatest contributor to the success of his team. His two tries were got after splendid runs, and without the aid of any of his comrades. Elliott appears to be about the only player in Auckland who exercises any judgment in throwing in the ball on the "line out."

The fine play of the Parnell three-quarters gave Hedge very little work to do at fullback, but what he had to do he did well.

Of the Parnell three-quarters Kissling was undoubtedly the safest. His quick punting and sure tackling relieved his side on numerous occasions.

Both Jervis and Ronayne were in fine form. The former got off several long punts which transferred the play from his own to the opponents' 25. He was also responsible for several smart dodgy runs, but is still inclined to hold the ball when collared. So far he has avoided having a penalty kick given against his team, and I sincerely hope his spell of good luck in this respect will not be broken in a representative match if he should cling on to the ball in his own 25. Ronayne's collaring was capital.

Owing to the clean manner in which the Parnell forwards heeled out, Edmunds had an easy time of it behind the scrum. He also made the most of all his chances.

Speight, Holmes and Anderson proved a tower of strength to their side on the line play, one of them invariably securing the ball, even when Ponsonby threw in.

Wright, Geard and Clarke were prominent in all the Parnell rushes. Wright and Clarke each secured a try by dribbling the ball across the line.

Charlie Stichbury had by far too much work to do on Saturday. He stopped many dangerous rushes, and his kicking was good, but I cannot forgive him for missing Elliott. It is far better to gradually advance towards the man carrying the ball than to recede from him.

Of the Ponsonby four three-quarters Gillespie and P. Flynn were the best. The former has improved greatly in his kicking. Flynn is the makings of a first-class man, and considering he was taken from the Ponsonby III. team into the seniors his play is all the more meritorious.

Neither Reg Masfield nor Scott were in anything like their true form, although Masfield made one splendid run, failing only to cross the line by about six inches.

"Satie" Ramsay was collared the very moment he touched the ball. Ronayne appeared to pay particular attention to Ramsay, who only got one decent opening throughout the whole game, when he evaded several Parnell backs, and would have scored had he stuck to the ball.

In his position behind the scrum Braund has still no rival in Auckland. On Saturday he had to make all his own chances, and started several passing runs by stopping forward rushes. His try was gained by a touch of the cleverness which always characterises his play. What price Albie behind the Parnell forwards?

The Ponsonby four three-quarter system will prove a great success before the end of the season, although it did not work any too well on Saturday.

Vic Langsford and Billy Cruickshank proved rather troublesome to the Parnell backs. Both are fast, and used their speed on Saturday by constantly following up the ball and preventing the opposing backs from returning it.

"Pilot" Riely is a really hard grafter and worth a place in any of our senior teams. He made a long run against Parnell, and finished it up with a good pass.

M. Flynn put in a lot of work in the scrum, and also kicked a pretty goal.

Mr G. Dixon acted as referee in the Parnell - Ponsonby match. Although points ahead of our ordinary common, garden referee, Mr Dixon was not as vigilant as on the previous Saturday,

when nothing appeared to escape his notice.

The game between Grafton and North Shore proved an interesting contest, and as I anticipated resulted in a win for the former. In this match also the scores give a wrong impression of the game, for although Grafton registered 20 points to North Shore's 3 points, the contest was far from being one-sided. The re-organisation of the Grafton teams appears to have materially strengthened that combination if we are to judge by results. Newton defeated Grafton by 6 points to nil. North Shore beat Newton by 11 points to 9, and now the Graftonites, after making several alterations in their team again come to life and dispose of North Shore by 20 points to 3. I do not by any means wish to attribute the success of the Graftonites to the fact that certain players were not included in the team, but their reversal of form nevertheless stares us in the face, and I suppose one of those things for which it is impossible to account.

The chief feature of the game was the splendid place kicking of Oliphant, who converted the four Grafton tries into goals. This is a really first-class performance.

It is generally considered that the team which North Shore placed in the field on Saturday was the strongest combination that has represented that district this season.

The scorers for Grafton were Young, Brady, and Stevenson, the latter securing two tries. For Shore Valentine succeeded in crossing the line.

"Jockey" Breen did a lot of work for Shore, his quick punts proving a great help to his side.

Charlie Marshall grafted like a Trojan in the scrum, and started several rushes from the throw in. Speight was also good on the line play.

Harvey was not as great a success as on the previous Saturday, yet he acquitted himself well.

Harry Stevenson played a great game for Grafton; both his tries were well earned. A continuation of Saturday's form will bring Harry well under the notice of the reps. selection committee.

The Grafton backs all proved reliable, their strong point being sure kicking. The try which Brady secured was the result of some rather pretty passing between Oliphant, Hay, the scorer, and several other Graftonites.

North Shore only played 14 men for a considerable part of the game, a player named Moffatt having to retire from the field through an accident.

The "go" between Suburbs and Newton proved a well contested game, the latter winning by 6 points to 3. Suburbs were without the aid of several good men, notably McKenzie, who has an injured arm. The game was fast from start to finish, the ball remaining hardly any time in any part of the field. Half-time was called with 3 points to the credit of each team, Rhodes having secured a try of Suburbs and Hobson converting a penalty kick for Newton. In the second spell Hobson crossed the Suburbs line by a dodgy run, thus bringing the points to Newton 6, Suburbs 3. "No time" was sounded without any alteration in the scores.

Freeman played a fine game at full-back for Newton. He appears to improve each time he plays, and it is a great pity he has not more weight.

Ike Mills came out as a half-back on Saturday, and appeared quite at home in his new rôle. He made several smart runs, and rather surprised the onlookers by his play.

Warnock was not brilliant, but made no mistakes.

Roberts was the best of the Newton backs, but did not get many chances. He made one splendid run, simply making hacks of the opposing backs, and although he crossed the line he had the bad luck to lose the ball in endeavouring to get behind the goal posts. This is the first occasion on which Roberts has failed to score against Suburbs.

W. Rhodes played a fine game for his team and scored. He had also hard luck in not scoring on another occasion.

Rishworth was not so good as usual.

Of the Newton forwards, Hobson and Williamson were about the best. The latter dribbled the ball past nearly all the Suburbs backs, and should have scored.

Donald shone on the line-out play.

E. T. Laurie continues to show good form, and appeared a cut above the other Suburbs forwards. He appears to train well, judging by the way in which he lasts the game out.

Major also showed a good example to his mates by fast following up.

The positions of the different clubs in the three championships are as follows:

	SENIORS.				Pts. for	Agst.
	P.	W.	D.	L.		
Parnell	3	3	0	0	48	13
Grafton	3	2	0	1	32	9
Newton	3	2	0	1	21	14
City	3	2	0	1	14	20
Ponsonby	4	2	0	2	27	34
North Shore ..	4	1	0	3	19	51
Suburbs	4	0	0	4	6	36

	FIRST JUNIORS.				Pts. for	Agst.
	P.	W.	D.	L.		
North Shore ..	4	3	0	1	60	25
Ponsonby	4	3	0	1	58	20
Grafton	3	2	0	1	23	29
Parnell	3	2	0	1	52	18
City	3	1	0	2	6	38
Suburbs	4	1	0	3	34	45
Newton	3	0	0	3	4	62

	SECOND JUNIORS.				Pts. for	Agst.
	P.	W.	D.	L.		
Grafton A	4	4	0	0	19	12
Newton	4	3	0	1	42	17
Grafton B	4	2	0	2	31	36
Parnell	4	2	0	2	32	23
Ponsonby	4	1	0	3	21	46
City	4	0	0	4	14	30

Grafton II defeated North Shore II by 14 points to 8. Martin, Cunningham and Jackson each secured a try. Cromwell converted one. For North Shore Quinn and Clarke crossed the line, Bartley converting one.

In their match with Suburbs, Newton cried enough at half time, the Suburbs' score being 28 points to nil.

The contest between Ponsonby II and Parnell II proved a great go, in the first spell neither team scoring. Ponsonby, however, completely got away with their opponents in the second spell, winning by 18 points to nil. Downey, Wright, Heaps, and Symonds scored for Ponsonby. Val Masfield fully sustained the reputation which he has acquired this season for place-kicking by converting three of the four tries. His performance so far is eight goals out of nine attempts, the one he missed being the easiest of all.

In the second junior division Grafton A beat City by 4 points to 3. Newton defeated Grafton B by 13 points to nil, and Parnell were victorious over Ponsonby by 13 points to nil.

Since penning the foregoing article on the question of professional referees, a meeting has taken place for the formation of a local Referees' Association. About 20 names were handed in to the Secretary of the Union, but nothing was done except to decide on the formation of the Association. Another meeting takes place this (Thursday) evening at the British Hotel.

At a meeting of the Rugby Union, held during the week, Messrs J. Arniel, W. Speight, and G. Carter were chosen as a selection committee.

I hear that Hector Clark, who, it will be remembered, played amongst the City seniors last season, had the bad luck to have his jawbone broken whilst playing in a match at Napier last week.

TARANAKI FOOTBALL.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

June 5.

The principal Senior Cup football match was played here last Saturday between Waimate and Star, the result being a draw, one try each. Good scored for Waimate and R. Bellringer for Star. Laing, an ex-Thames rep., playing half-back for Star, got his shoulder injured during the game.

Tukapa meet the Star II. in the Junior Cup round on Thursday. A big game is anticipated.

The Taranaki rep. team promises to be a strong one this year.

Wellington will probably pay Taranaki a visit this season.

HAWKE'S BAY FOOTBALL.

(BY WIRE.—FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

June 5th.

On Saturday last the Napier senior and junior teams met the County seniors and juniors on the Recreation Ground, and scored a double win. The junior match came on for decision first, and after an uninteresting struggle in which a terrible lot of talking was indulged in, the Napier team were returned the victors by six points to four. Peacock scored a try, and Cunningham kicked a goal from a free kick for the winners; and Cottle potted a goal for the losers. Peacock, Cunningham and Cotterill showed best form for Napier, and Hannen, Spence and Graham for County.

The senior game was very hotly contested from start to finish. In the first spell Caulton potted a magnificent goal for the County, and Ryan scored a try for Napier, which Caradus converted. No score was obtained in the second spell, although both sides on more than one

occasion were very hard pressed. The County team mustered no less than eleven Maoris in their ranks, and these with very few exceptions did their best to incapacitate as many of their opponents as possible, but on one was, *mirabile dictu*, hurt to any extent. For Napier, Bennett, Crowe, Caradus, Donnelly and Wilson played a sterling game, while Cullen, Caulton, Chadwick and Mose showed up prominently for the County.

The senior match Caledonians v. Te Aute ended after a very one-sided game, in favour of the former by 13 points to nil.

Music, Drama.

By THE PROMPTER.

THE Montague-Turner people open at the Opera House on the 28th.

THE statement that Mr and Mrs Bancroft intend touring Australia and New Zealand next year is contradicted in London.

MAX O'RELL'S two years' lecturing in Australia and America has resulted in a clear haul of £28,000.

FANING & MOONEY'S Specialty Co. gave a new programme at the Opera House last night and attracted a good audience.

A PARISIAN ballet dancer who died recently left a fortune of £100,000, said to have been earned in the business.

A BAD cold from which Mr Gee is suffering prevented the usual weekly popular concert being given last night. The next concert will be given on June 13.

AUCKLANDERS will be interested to learn that Arthur Clappett recently gave a concert at Invercargill, and at the end of the programme dashed off into a fervid temperance lecture.

THE Parisians have laid the theatre on to their homes by means of the telephone, which perfectly transmits every inflection of an actors' or a singers' voice. After a host gives a dinner he can turn on the Grand Opera for the benefit of his guests.

WILLIAMSON AND GARNER make another invasion of New Zealand towards the end of the year. Present arrangements point to the tour opening in Dunedin on Boxing night and the inclusion in the repertoire of Paul Jones, The Mountebanks, and La Cigale.

IN Bland Holt's new sporting drama, "The Prodigal's Daughter," there is a virtuous stable boy who, after accepting £500 to "nobbie" the favourite, is induced to forego the tempting bribe by an appeal to his conscience. A Sydney paper wants to know how many £500 proof stable boys are there in Australia.

MR LIONEL BROUGH, in the *Sketch*, tells a story of Fred Leslie. "My first acquaintance with Leslie," he says, "was at the Royalty. Somehow he had the run of the theatre, and used to sit in the stalls and watch the rehearsals. In a short time he knew everyone's part, and would play it when occasion offered. He was even willing to take a permanent part gratuitously, but I pointed out that that was not fair to the profession, so I think he afterwards got a pound a week. When we determined to put on Paul Pry we were in straits about a Captain Hardy. While we were talking it over, my eye fell on Leslie, who was lounging about, and I asked him if he had ever played the part in the province. 'Yes, a few times.' 'Well, then, come to rehearsal to-morrow morning,' I replied. Nine days after we played Paul Pry, and never shall I forget his inimitable Captain Hardy in bearing and get-up. After the curtain was down I congratulated him most warmly. 'By the by, where did you play the part before?' 'Never before,' he replied; 'but I wasn't going to let the chance slip you gave me.' He must have gone to Lacy's and bought the play and have sat up all night to learn it."

OUR MELBOURNE LETTER.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

May 16th.

TO-NIGHT is the last for the present of the Dan Barry company at the Alexandra Theatre. On Saturday night next a change of scene takes place, as Barry, like the cute kind that he is, opens up with Fitzgerald's Circus. The idea of bringing a circus right into the heart of