

shall be deemed a non-starter," would prevent fraud, and to use a phrase not strikingly original, would "fill a long felt want." We will be glad to see it passed.

THE merits and demerits of the totalisator are agitating Victoria as well as New Zealand. Here the agitation is in the direction of the extermination of the machine: On the other side of the water the movement is in favour of the introduction of the totalisator. South Australia has taken the plunge and there the ting ting of the machine bell is heard on the racecourse, and during the recent meeting at Adelaide, Victorians were eagerly criticising the machine. The Victorian owner, Mr S. G. Cook, summed up the position by saying the machine has converted Adelaide into a city full of liars—a remark which is not particularly striking for its originality. A Melbourne Sportsman representative was there to sum up the position, and he has declared the conclusions he arrived at in a recent number of his journal. He has written an article entitled "The Totalisator: its pros and cons, as shown by Adelaide experiences," which is interesting reading to New Zealanders who should be in a better position to appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of the betting machine than any other colonists in Australasia. The author of the article in question admits that the machine has been very beneficial to South Australian racing, because it has enabled clubs by the revenue received in percentage charges to hold race meetings and realise a profit which is sufficient in amount to maintain the sport in a form that would not exist without this assistance. It is stated that previous to the introduction of the machine Adelaide clubs found it impossible to maintain the sport in a satisfactory manner and derive the essential profit from it, and we are further told "the deplorable periods in the history of the South Australian Turf tell a woful tale of the racing state." The one value of the machine is held to be that it provides a means of bringing a large income to the club, and that with the revenue realised racing can be maintained at a profit where formerly it existed "by the skin of its teeth," to use a vulgarism. Racing in South Australia is said to be impossible without the machine, and therein lies its benefaction and justification. But the Sportsman writer points out that such a parlous state of things does not exist in glorious boom-stricken Victoria—what about the Melbourne Cup shorn of half its glory?—and that therefore there is no reason for the displacement of the Ring in Melbourne. "Flemington," the authority quoted goes on to say, "in all its magnificence has been brought to its condition without the aid of the totalisator, and in the past the sport has been a source of such wealth to the V.R.C. that its course and appointments vie in splendour with those of the old world, while its stakes have been little if anything inferior and the £10,000 prize of *past* (the italics are our own) Melbourne Cups stands as a monument of the world's record of added money direct from the funds of a club."

BUT if the machine were introduced into Victoria there would be no necessity to allude to the glory of *past* Melbourne Cups. The glory would be present, and would be shining with added lustre. That is the main value of the machine, we are told, and its minor factors of worth are that "it enforces a method of post cash betting, its mechanism exhibits the sums invested on each horse, successful backers are sure of their money, and when a rank outsider wins the return is greater to the investor, as a rule, than that which would be obtainable from the bookmaker." Coming closer to the direct issue, as to whether the advantages of the totalisator outweigh the disadvantages the writer remarks:—"The machine investments comprise a pool made up of backers' money alone, and, as a natural matter of course, the object of owners and the other section of bettors is to obtain as much out of the pool as their speculative powers permit, and until the machine is closed it is impossible for a backer, whether he be an owner or otherwise, to obtain a knowledge of what his odds or return may be." Of course the writer seizes on the very natural argument that the betting being at sight an owner may, on finding his price too short, alter his riding instructions, and substitute the order "lose" for "win." "Beg the question as we may," the writer goes on to say, "it is undeniable that owners, in the majority of instances, must have an opportunity

of securing a good wager over a fancied horse before that racer will run at his best." Well, the machine does not make that impossible. We have the machine here, but in a big contest the bulk of the owner's money is placed at a certain figure with a member of the Ring. The machine and pencil can exist side by side, and the introduction of the one does not necessarily mean the extermination of the other. The writer proceeds: "All factors dispassionately considered, I feel confident that, with the immense scope of Victorian racing, the introduction of the totalisator will have a great tendency to increase the already too frequent evil of dishonest running, and this constitutes one of the greatest objections to the system. It is contended that the machine is beneficial because it does not offer bribes to jockeys, but from observation of riding, made keen by study and constant practice, I can assert that the jockeys where the "tote" is employed are no better than in other places, and, moreover, they can, and do, bet in the machine and the temptations are equally as great as elsewhere. In fact, the "fiddling" in a race, and those artistic losing finishes of the nearly win order, are only too prevalent where the instrument is used." But can it be said that jockeys are purer in their dealings or non-bettors where the Ring only exists? That is no argument. In conclusion the writer plumps against the machine and writes: "When the day comes that the V.R.C. and V.A.T.C. cannot hold their meetings under good management and show a profit at the end of the season, then it is time to introduce the totalisator, but until that epoch comes—and it is not likely to—it will be found a wise policy to let well alone." Well, time will show.

THE barring on the totalisator finds a place on the country delegates' list, and he sums up the position in the following terse motion, "No horse shall be barred on the totalisator." And the power to do so should certainly be taken away from stewards or owner. Let us take the barring of St. Hippo for the Derby of 1893 and see what was possible. But before doing so let us state we have not the slightest desire in what we are about to say to make the slightest insinuation respecting anyone. We are merely putting forward a supposititious case and showing what *might* be done. St. Hippo was a moral for that Derby. His connections must have known that much respecting the colt, and they must also have known that Brown Alice (an occupant of the same stable, mark you), judged through her trials with St. Hippo, was the mistress of the others. The race proved that, for the records of the event show that St. Hippo won in a hand canter and that Brown Alice won just as easily from the rest of the opposition. Now she paid dividends of £4 18s and £7 9s. Knowing what two representatives he had in the race, what sort of an inducement was there for St. Hippo's owner to bar him, when he could win the stake with him and receive a most respectable dividend from Brown Alice. St. Hippo would have only paid a matter of shillings. Comment is needless. Barring should be done away with, and we hope Mr Alison's motion will receive the attention it deserves. His last motion, "That all meetings of conferences be open to the press" also receives our unqualified approval. What right have the delegates to hold their meetings in the existing hole in the corner, Star Chamber fashion. It is an insult to the racing bodies and to the club represented not to give them any opportunity of learning what were the arguments used for or against a proposition. Mr Alison's motions are admirably conceived, and we wish them every luck.

AN anti-gambling crusade has been started in the old country by the members of the National Anti-Gambling League. This virtuous organisation states it has got tired of going for the little men and that it is now going to prosecute all the big clubs, all the big owners and managers of the big race meetings and all the mathematical professors whose address is Tattersall's. The league has found out that the Betting Houses (or Places) Act, 1853, extends to credit betting as well as ready money transactions, and consequently its legal advisers have advised that rings and turf clubs are illegal betting places. Clubs which are used in the old country for betting, pure and simple, will be crusaded against by the league. Speaking to a *Pall Mall Budget* man the secretary of the league lately said:—"The demon of gain shouts from the throats of five thousand bookmakers on a hundred courses. Their customers are

believed to number half a million souls, not one per cent. of whom it is estimated fail to lose their money in the long run, amounting in the aggregate to five millions sterling per annum. Some of the chief operators in this ghastly business retire with fortunes of one or two hundred thousand pounds. Jockeys make fortunes, and are pampered as prime donnas. A child hardly through the School Board curriculum has received a thousand pounds for winning a race. The enormous money interests afford occasion for every kind of fraud. And here is a pointed instance of the anomalous condition of things. I have just heard from Plymouth, where there has been a raid by sixty detectives, that the small fry who were caught were not only imprisoned, but were being marched handcuffed through the streets at the very same time as the authorities and the police were protecting the aristocratic betting men on Epsom Downs." The league states that the members of the public who bet at race meetings will not be prosecuted, but that bookmakers and owners of meetings who have permitted betting will have to meet it in court. Really the world is getting very moral.

Inter-Provincial

[FROM OWN CORRESPONDENTS.]

NAPIER.

June 20th.

My selections for the various events of the Hawke's Bay Hunt Club's Steeplechase Meeting are as follows:—Open Steeples—Dromedary 1, Raven 2, Repo 3. Hunt Club Steeples—Lascar 1, Taurikiraki 2, Neva 3. Winter Flat—Prince Charlie 1, Focus 2, Leontine 3. Hunters' Steeples—Lascar 1, Roscius 2, Athlete 3.

By some error Pamoana appeared in my last notes as Pounamu. The former is a fine upstanding black gelding by Natator, and won the Hurdle Race at the late Town and Suburban Meeting.

For the minor events at the Hawke's Bay Jockey Club's Meeting my selections are:—June Handicap—Musketeer 1, Midas 2, Rayfeldt 3. Ladies' Bracelet—Kopere 1, Lady Hamilton 2, Iliad 3. Maiden Steeplechase—Pamoana 1, Taurikiraki 2, Kaffir 3.

[BY WIRE.]

June 26th.

Mr S. H. Gollan has named his yearling colt by Maxim—Florence McCarthy Cuirass, and his yearling filly Maxim—Fair Nell Freda. The youngsters will leave Napier on Saturday for Melbourne. They are engaged in the Maribyrnong Plate.

The weather since Wednesday last has, with the exception of a few showers on Sunday night, been splendid, and should it continue so the course at the forthcoming meeting should be in good order. Some good work has been done of late, and although the fields for the two big events at the Steeplechase Meeting are small, the contest should be keen. Morag is a great local favourite, but there are many who will pin their faith to Norton, remembering his gallant fight with Gondolier last year. Tritica is also much fancied by his connections, while Repo and Dainty, the latter presumably on account of his being sired by Ahua, are reckoned to have very good chances of being returned the winner. I shall stick to Morag, apprehending most danger from Norton and Repo. The presence of Kuliné will add additional interest to the Hurdle Race, but, bar accidents, Melinite should be returned the winner, with T Rose and Kapua in places.

Lascar will journey to Gisborne on Saturday, where he is engaged in the Hunters' Steeplechase at the Gisborne Park Meeting.

TARANAKI.

June 22nd.

Mr G. Slater, the well-known sporting writer, is wintering in the Rangitikei district.

The Taranaki Trotting Club will hold their next meeting in September. Mr W. Keith, who passed through New Plymouth the other day, commissioned a local business man to purchase Waiuku, if the colt could be got for £300. Tempting as the offer is, I don't think it will fetch Jay Russell.

As the Hawke's Bay Winter Meeting has been postponed till Thursday next, I still have another chance to record my impressions of the principal events. In the Hurdles I like Melinite, and the only one I can see to lower her colours is

Kapua. I prefer the chance of Victrix in the Steeplechase, Morag for the Maiden Steeplechase, and Sylvanus in the Ladies' Bracelet.

There is absolutely nothing stirring in the sporting line in this district at present.

Pyroxlin (Foulshot—Ina) in Mr Teed's stables, is now being ridden in exercise by T. Salter, who has been recently employed in that stable.

Mutiny with 10.9 on his back, will have to be reckoned with in the V.R.C. Grand National Steeplechase.

The cross-country gelding Dick has quite recovered from the knocking about he got at Wellington and Egmont, and he looks fit enough to win a few more events before he is retired from the track.

The Taranaki Jockey Club Committee have not yet reported on Mr Samuel's suggestion that a dividend should be paid out on the second as well as the first horse.

Mr R. H. Nolan, who will represent the country clubs in this district at the forthcoming conference, has written the various secretaries asking them if they have any matters they would like brought forward.

WELLINGTON.

June 22nd.

One repeatedly hears of nominations and acceptances for various races being received too late by secretaries of racing clubs, and wonder is often expressed why owners and trainers are so dilatory and are not more cautious. They invariably leave the intimation of their wishes to the very last moment, and it is not surprising that time after time we read of the omission of certain animals from the official published list, owing to the notifications having been received after the advertised time. Most people down this way thought that Dromedary would have a show of winning the Hawke's Bay Steeplechase, after his fairly good performance across country in the Open Steeplechase at the United Hunt Club's meeting at the Hutt, seeing that she is pretty well just now, but her name did not appear in the list of acceptances for the event, and there was some surprise expressed in consequence. It was known that she was going up, and when her name did not appear as an acceptor it was surmised that she had gone wrong. However, it subsequently transpired that owing to the heavy weather that prevailed, the wires were down, and the message did not reach its destination until too late. Unity's acceptances were missed in the same way, and it was only when the horse was about to be placed on board the train at Palmerston North that the trainer was made aware of the fact that his horse could not start. No matter what the circumstances are, nominations or acceptances cannot be received after the time fixed for receiving them, the reason for such a rule being obvious. Trainers and owners should adopt a plan which would often save them trouble and annoyance, and that is to send their nominations by letter early to the secretary, and confirm them by wire subsequently if they so desire. The letter only costs twopence, and the time involved in writing a few lines; but most people do not bother inconveniencing themselves to this extent. It must be very annoying to a man who has his eye on a certain good stake which he has a reasonable chance of annexing to find he has lost even a start through his own thoughtlessness. Telegraphic communication is often interrupted when bad weather is prevalent, and often messages do not reach their destination until hours and hours after they have been placed in the office for despatch.

I notice that Kempenfeldt, for whom Mr Gollan gave 560 guineas at the Wellington Park sale some time ago, is to be offered by auction at Hastings. He went to Australia with Pounamu and The Possible, but, proving untrainable, had to be sent back again. Renata, by Albany—No Name, also saw Australian soil, but never did any good there, being subject to the bursting of blood vessels. He is to be offered at the same time. Last season he did stud duty at Omahu, Hawke's Bay, Mr Paratene having used him. Forerunner, by King of Clubs—En Avant, has not had much opportunity of proving himself as a sire. His best horse racing is Golden Plover. The son of En Avant has been kept at the station, where he performed stud duty, with the exception of one season, when he was leased to a Hawera breeder.

[BY WIRE.]

June 26.

At the last meeting of the stewards of