

SIR.—To decide a wager could you settle the following: Five players are at Nap. the first to speak went Nap. Is it possible to get a hand to beat a Nap hand?—NEMO. Answer—No.

The old hurdle racer Trapper, who was shipped for Australia last week, has won in stakes during his lengthy career some £1,200. His best days are over, and it is questionable if another good race can be got out of him.

The Auckland Racing Club are having the grass gallop at Ellerslie repaired and newly turfed. It is a pity that the Club did not take steps to have this done sooner, so as to have the track in good order for those trainers wishing to get their horses ready for early spring engagements. However, better late than never, and when finished it will make a good track.

The grand total put through the totalisators in New Zealand last season, amounted to £650,000. It was estimated that the nett profits from this to the various clubs was £48,750, the balance of the 10 per cent., £16,250 being absorbed in working the machine, the latter estimate is based on a 2½ per cent reckoning; and we know as a fact, that it is very considerably in excess of the commission obtained by the Auckland totalisator proprietors.

By the last mail Common was favourite for the Doncaster St. Leger at even money; Mimi, the winner of the One Thousand and Oaks, being second in the market. The favourite's defeat the other day must not be taken into consideration, as after the Derby he would sure to have been eased up, and the 10lb penalty would have told when pitted against a good, though uncertain horse like Surefoot over 1½ miles.

At the invitation of Mr. Harry Walshe, we had a peep at Mr. S. C. Caulton's Cloth of Gold, who is looking big and blooming; with every prospect of filling out, he is to be put in more active work almost immediately. Mr. Walshe has two loose boxes, and accommodation for 40 horses, at his Greyhound livery and bait stables, and on the occasion of our visit we noticed some remarkably good cuts of horses which he keeps for hire.

The *Canterbury Times* says that Mr. Dan Thurston's horse Dangerous has been taken back from Wellington to Palmerston North. He was very severely scorched by the fire, one leg being very badly injured. The horse has been much affected by the smoke which got into his lungs. It will be some time before the popular old steeplechaser is in full trim again.

"Mazepa" of the *Otago Witness* is a thorough believer of The Painter's stock, as he picks Oeo and Ahua as a double for the National meeting, Ahua being the pick of the Hurdle Race. Ahua has not accepted for the latter, but is favourite for the Steeplechase. This shows the folly of picking horses before the acceptances come out, even then there is a great amount of luck, as a great deal of crooked running is going on.

Of the several accidents that occurred at the Wellington Hunt Club gathering, H. Woods, who fractured his arm close to the wrist, through The Druid coming down, fared worst. Woods had only just recovered the use of his right arm, which was broken by a kick received from a horse a couple of months previously. Mr. P. F. Tancred interested himself in raising a subscription for the unfortunate rider, and between £20 and £30 was collected.

We hear that George Wright has expressed himself aggrieved with a paragraph we gave publicity to about his opinions of Australian ponies making phenomenal times fetlock deep in mud; and demanded that we shall keep his name out of our paper in future. We beg to inform him that what was published was correct in every particular, and it was said in the presence of a member of our staff, and can be corroborated, and while we have not the remotest intention of offending Mr. Wright, we are quite determined to make use of his name again, or that of any other trainer, if we deem it necessary; as a means of conveying news to our sporting readers.

TOTALISATOR TAX.

(TO THE EDITOR.)

SIR.—The contemplated tax of 2½ per cent. announced by a Liberal Government forcibly reminds me of the action of Robinson, the gaol-bird, in "My Schools and Schoolmasters," by Hugh Millar. He broke the face of the registering machine because it told his gaoler how often the crank was turned and whether he was scheming. The Government seem half inclined to degrade themselves to practice the part played by the prisoner by imposing a tax on the most truthful and trustworthy agent connected with racing, crippling its action with a tax, and driving the public to bookmakers and consultation agents, while the truth-telling, honest, upright machine bears a hated tax to make it odious. For every £1 invested it rings a bell, registers the fact, and is beheld by all beholders. Even a horse-owner, trainer, or jockey cannot quiet it. While he takes tickets on his favourite it rings out merrily whether he puts on one, five, or a tenner, and anyone can follow him. This is fair to the public compared with private betting, and should be more allowable. The public pay 10 per cent. already to those who run the show, and it would be very unreasonable to increase that amount, seeing that they have to pay a big sum for a day's fun to get admittance to it. Again, a great deal of the money is re-invested, and thus the public get a second, third, aye fourth and an eighth chance to win back their money. The 10 per cent. also goes in stakes and keeps the ball rolling. Should the Government impose a tax they should send a sporting character to collect it, and when he took his share in the maiden race he might win largely on the others. If any imposition be made this should be a paramount condition, and as the Premier wants £10,000 out of the machine, it would appear to be the fairest way of raising it. It at any rate would shield them from the charge likely to be levelled at them should they grab the money off the machine and close their fist on all the clear gain on a gambling transaction. Such a thing would be without a "Balance."—I am, etc., NO. ONE, ONE.

VOLUNTEER NEWS.

[BY TORPEDO.]

[Contributions to this column are invited. All communications should be addressed to "Torpedo," and reach this office not later than Tuesday in each week. Notes from country corps will be specially acceptable.]

The subject of remark at the Sunday parade was the good-looking Drum-Major—Captain Geddes was out of it. Kearsley led our brave defenders at the head of the band, carrying his wand of office more carefully than artistically, but he got through it with his usual bravery and self-importance.

Why is it that Captain Geddes persists in holding back Lieut. J. F. Haultain's resignation as an officer of the "A" Battery? I know as a matter of fact that the latter gentleman resigned long since, but Captain Geddes has shuffled off the acceptance of it in the hope—perhaps wisely in this instance—that it would be withdrawn, and from what I have heard there is a strong probability of Mr. Haultain being induced to retain his position. Is it Captain Geddes' foresight, his luck, or his tact? I put it down to my second query.

I am glad my remarks of last week have had their effect, for at the last meeting of the "Good Old Vics." Captain Cooper turned up, and fully vindicated himself against any charge of negligence of his corps. The Captain explained his position to his Company, produced a doctor's certificate, said he was now convalescent, dismissed his Company and entertained them at the Park Hotel with a promise of better attendance in future.

A member of the Royal Irish Rifles in a communication asks me to say publicly that he has a grievance against a certain volunteer officer of his own corps, but as he fails to make specific charges I will take no further notice of him on this subject.

What a farce! Think of it! Training boys from the Kohimaramara school to obsolete gunnery! "Go think of it in silence," and ask "Mary Steadman's" opinion. I say bosh!

I have received the following letter: "Sir, —Messrs. Garlick and Cranwell, upholsterers and furniture dealers, gave prizes value £7 to the Victoria Rifles to be fired for, not £20 as stated in *SPORTING REVIEW* of 16th inst. In justice to G. & C., who don't wish to be misrepresented, other intending donors who may be selecting prizes for some of the other companies, and the volunteers generally, I think you should kindly correct this evident mistake. —AN OLD VIC." ["Torpedo" made no mistake as far as his information went. It came from a non-commissioned officer of the Vics. I shall be happy to hear from the above correspondent again on volunteer matters generally.]

The Sydenham Rifles are said to possess only three rifles reliable for shooting, and one man has had three rifles burst in his hands within the last few weeks, fortunately without an injury. My explanation is that the ammunition is at fault, not the rifles; for the simple reason that the solid drawn cases have been refilled too often.

I think the Auckland Navals are dead; I have heard nothing from them during the week except from "Chris" Smith, who is growling about not having a uniform. I have written for the loan of John L. Sullivan's, which is just about his size.

The Ponsonby Navals fired for the first time for Mr. T. Peacock's medal at the Mount Eden Range on Saturday, and Petty-Officer John Ewan has been accused of painting the tips of his bullets for "old Davy's target," as his scores have been too good lately. Ewan's score is not often beaten on the Mount Eden Range, and I congratulate him not only for this score but for other good ones lately. The ten highest are as follows:—

	200yds.	300yds.	500yds.	Tl.
Petty Officer John Ewan	31	29	23	83
Chief P. O. A. Graham	28	22	13	63
Petty Officer W. Sherson	28	16	18	62
Seaman Erickson	23	19	19	61
Petty Officer John Spinley	27	23	11	61
Petty Officer Charles Ewan	25	19	13	57
Seaman W. Stanley	26	22	9	57
Petty Officer G. E. Spinley	25	18	12	56
Seaman G. Pasley	30	14	9	53
Petty Officer W. Nesbitt	20	16	16	52
Totals	284	198	143	605

The possible being 1,050 for a team of ten, seven shots at each range, gives an average of 60½ per man.

The Victoria Rifles thought it necessary to defend themselves against Mrs. Aldis' charge of "the diminutive appearance and size of the volunteers." My advice to them is to leave that lady severely alone, for she can be very troublesome and irritating, and her sex protects her from being handled as roughly in print as she deserves to be.

There was only a moderately-good muster of the volunteers at the Church Parade on Sunday morning. The parade was called to celebrate the Jubilee of St. Paul's Church, which is said to be the first military church in New Zealand. Major Goring, the officer commanding the district, was in command, and, headed by the Garrison Band, they marched through Queen-street and Customs-street to the church. The following were present:—Auckland Navals, Lieut. Commander Parker and Lieuts. Smith and Little; Ponsonby Navals, Capt. Millar; "A" Battery, Capt. Geddes and Lieut. O'Brien; Victoria Rifles, Capt. Cooper and Lieut. Somers; City Guards, Capt. Kohn; Newton Rifles, Capt. Robertson and Lieut. Taylor; Royal Irish, Capt. Tobin and Lieut. Caulton. The "A" Battery showed to the greatest advantage. The Catholic portion of the volunteers fell out at the bottom of Wyndham-street and marched to St. Patrick's Cathedral. The Staff was represented by Major Goring, Lieut. Grant and Sergt.-Major Scully.

ATHLETICS, ETC.

The committee appointed by the professional runners met at the British Hotel on Monday afternoon, the 20th inst. Mr. Simpson, junr., attended to give any information required regarding the Zealandia Athletic Grounds. Mr. P. Quinlan asked if it had been fully decided to hold the Sheffield Handicaps at the Zealandia Rink, and was informed that that was the original intention, and he withdrew from the committee in consequence, saying he considered the Domain was the proper place, and it could be had at ten guineas a day.

A match has been arranged between "Hoppy" Jackson, and "Wobbly" Tucker, over 100yds, for £2 aside, to take place next Monday.