

MR. EVITT has had a difficult task to bring them together in the Steeplechase, as there are so many "ragged" ones engaged, as he has proved by lumping eight out of the sixteen together, while two others are close to them. Whalebone, 11st 7lb, is naturally top weight, as he is a smart one over sticks, and has the reputation of being a sure jumper. Why Fish-monger, 10st 9lb, is called upon to give Ingarangi 2lb is more than I can understand. The former has only once got the course, and that was at the Onslow Farewell Meeting, when all the others came to grief; while the other belongs to a dangerous stable, and has been quietly worked ever since he has been in it, but he has done all he has ever been asked to do. The hill will find out The Colonel's pipes. Commotion and Rough, at 10st, are not out of it. Silvio's, 9st 10lb, day is passed, and it is cruelty almost to run him. Kate, 9st 10lb, will not like the course, while it is difficult to pick a dangerous one out of the ragged division, though if Hune was sound she might prove dangerous. It is even difficult to pick one that will get the course without a mistake, much more so a likely winner, so I will leave it alone until after the acceptances.

THE Auckland Trotting Club have issued their handicaps for their meeting that takes place at Potter's Paddock on the 16th of April. The entries, especially in the pony races, are so numerous that it would be a waste of time to go through them in detail. There is one thing noticeable that there are several ponies that have been running at country meetings have now joined the majority, and have placed themselves under the "ban," thus proving the great mistake the Metropolitan clubs made in not taking pony races under their control, and it will be a long time ere an entry of 34 and 29 will be seen at any other place. The handicappers have succeeded well in their work for the pony races, but they have not given satisfaction to the trotting division. As their limits are much too long they are certainly not *au fait* at their work. In the first place, a horse trotting is supposed to cover ten yards a second, but this is rather a high rate for the class engaged at Potter's Paddock. As nearly as I can time it it may be put down at eight yards, therefore in the two and a-half mile race the scratch horse has to give the limit horse 504 yards start; in the two miles 320 yards, and in the three mile Harness Trot 560 yards. Now this is almost impossible on a track like Potter's Paddock. The handicappers say that some horses could not win with any limit. This might be the case, but why are they started? If they have no chance it must be to interfere with those that have. Take the Easter Handicap Trot of two and a-half miles. Rarus is scratch; Mystery, Scotchman, and The Broker are at the limit, 63secs. Two of these should never have been entered, as they have no pretensions to trot, so if they had been put back, their owners would not have entered them again. Fibre, 45sec, and Tyrone, 53sec, are let off too easily. What the public want to see is good trotting, and it would be much better if only half a dozen good horses started than a dozen duffers. Taking the handicaps all through the scratch horse has a very poor show. The Easter and Harness Trot look at the mercy of those with from 40sec to 50sec start, but we shall know more when the acceptances appear.

THE acceptances for the C.J.C. Great Autumn and Easter Handicaps are to hand. Seventeen remain in for the former. Last week I selected Cruchfield, Prime Warden, Kulnine, and Ilium. The latter is a non-acceptor. Merrie England, from what I can learn, will never be in his old form again, and the same remarks apply to Crackshot. Cutts is in hopes of getting another race out of Dudu, but I doubt her being brought to the post in her old form. At present I see no reason to alter my opinion, and give the preference to Cruchfield, Prime Warden, and Kulnine, in the order named, though many prefer the latter for the shorter race.

Twenty remain in the Great Easter Handicap. Of my last week's selections only Flinders and Ilium accepted. As Clanranald has declined it would be as well to put Kulnine in his place, and Hippomones instead of Huguenot. Taking three, Ilium, Kulnine, and

Hippomones read the best, but I will make a final selection later on.

There are only five remaining in the Champagne Stakes, but they are the best of the year, being Wakawatea, Stepniak, Vogengang, Launceston, and Day Dream. If the former has not suffered from the amount of work he has done this season, he should about win, Vogengang being the next best.

THE acceptances, with the exception of the Novel Race, for the Avondale Meeting, which takes place next Saturday, must be considered very good, and with a fine afternoon there should be some good sport. The winners will be difficult to pick. Mr. Halstead should be satisfied with his handicaps.

Only four have declined the Maiden Plate, leaving thirteen to fight it out. The ancient maiden Warrior, 8st 12lb, heads the list. At this he is not out of it. Transit, 8st 7lb, meets Acacia, 7st 9lb, on 5lb worse terms than she did at Papakura, when she won by a short half length, at the same time she got the best of the start. Kate, 7st 9lb, was looked upon as a good thing at Helensville, but cut up badly. The others are very moderate, so the best to stand perhaps is Focus, Acacia or Chance.

There are ten remaining in the Hurdle Race. From recent running it is a difficult race to pick. Ingarangi, 10st 12lb, if fit and meant, reads well; so does Stepper, 10st 7lb. Rewarawa, 10st 6lb, and Warrior, 9st 7lb, are in the same interest. The latter is new at this game. Ika Vuka, 9st 7lb, ran forward at Papakura, though he jumped the wing of the hurdles but gained nothing by it. Potentate, 9st, astonished many by the way he ran at Helensville, and as he has now 5lb less on his back must have a show. But perhaps the best to stand are Stepper, Warrior, or Potentate.

Ten have declared content for the Avondale Cup. Ingorina, 9st 3lb, on his running at Helensville, can have but little show. Tuna, 7st 7lb, after her running at the Lake, reads well. Brigade, 7st 5lb, only meets Ingorina on the same terms, while Ida, 7st 5lb, meets him on 5lb worse. Warrior, 7st 6lb, and Vasator, 6st 9lb, are in the same stable, and I think the latter will be the one. Tulloch, 7st, on previous performances, is treated very leniently. The race should fall to Tuna, Tulloch and Vasator.

The Maiden Steeplechase has eleven acceptances. The majority of them are making their first appearance over a country, so it is a question what will get over it. Tommy, 10st 7lb, got such a gruelling the last time he ran that it is a question if he will like jumping again. The b m by Ingomar (Lady Douglas), 9st 7lb, is an unknown quantity, but she belongs to a dangerous stable. Perhaps the best to rely on are Neli, Potentate, or Assassin.

There are nine in the Pony Race, but unless one learns something on the course it had better be left alone. On paper La Grippe reads as well as anything.

There are six in the Steeplechase. Ingarangi, 10st 12lb, if in his old form, should have no trouble in winning, but I have my doubts. Silvio, 10st 7lb, is done for. Kate, 10st 4lb, is a sure fencer, with a fair turn of speed, and likes a flat course. Rewerewa, 10st, is supposed to be a fair mare. Tommy, 9st 12lb, and Cloth of Gold, 9st 7lb, I have no fancy for.

The Flying Stakes has an acceptance of sixteen. This race is greatly dependent on previous running, but on paper St. Clements, 7st 12lb, and Octopus, 7st, read the best, as they have no other engagements.

Few know the great strides that horse breeding has made in France during the last eighteen years, when the French Government first established its studs of horse breeding, which were begun with 2,500 sires of all breeds and which number has been practically adhered to ever since, though at the beginning of the year 1890 there were a dozen over the regulation number. The last bulletin issued by the French Ministry contains a report by M. de Cormette, the director of the stud, on its administration during that year. The sires comprise 182 English bred, 102 Arab, 159 Anglo-Arab, 1,742 half-breds, and 327 draught horses. The pure bred horses are practically equal in number to those of last year, but there has been an increase in English Arabs and a decrease in Arabs.

Nearly 500 of the horses classed as half-breds are three-quarter blood. During the year 255 horses passed out of the studs either by death

or sale. Of the 37 which died 12 were from typhoid affections, 13 from intestinal maladies, and 4 from diseases of the respiratory organs. The 218 which were passed out of the service included 74 as worn out or from *bad temper* and 47 from *roaring* and *whistling*. The effectiveness of the studs has been kept up from the resources at the command of the administration, but it has only been with difficulty, as foreign competitors have made the price go up and more money has to be given for renewals. The result of the year's service of the stallions was the most satisfactory that had been experienced. The 2,451 effective stallions, located at 954 stations, served 139,033 mares, an increase over the previous year of 18,860 services. This is attributed to a better foreign inquiry and the more general desire to secure the services of the State sires in all parts of the country. The amount received for fees was £37,264, an advance of £4,748 on the previous twelve months. The mares served included 1,590 thoroughbreds, 77,417 half-breds, and 60,107 draught mares. There were demands for more stations, which the administration were not able to comply with, as the State did not consider its mission to provide sires for all mares intended to be bred from, and the Government wish to see private studs increased, especially for horses suitable for the army. The ages of the sires belonging to the State are as follows:—Three-year-olds, 14; four, 191; five, 307; six, 201; seven, 189; eight, 215; nine, 191; ten, 160; eleven, 137; twelve, 128; thirteen, 136; fourteen, 167; fifteen and upwards, 562.

The New Zealand Government are now receiving a considerable sum from the totalisator; if they used it for establishing stations for sires on the same principle as the French Government they would be conferring a great benefit on the Colony, as the breed of horses is greatly deteriorating owing to the number of scrubbers that there are left entire all over the country. The demand for good horses will not cease for many years, for as the Colony goes ahead and roads improve more horses will be required for home use, while India will always be a market for the proper class of horse. Australia, unless they alter their mode of breeding, will never keep it supplied, and everyone knows, or ought to, that the climate of this Colony is far superior for rearing horses than any part of Australia. It is surprising that no one in Auckland has had enough enterprise to go in for boiling down horses, as every part of them is valuable—blood, hide, hair, bones, entrails, and the oil they yield. A scrubber properly manipulated should return from £3 to £4, and there are plenty sold in the sale-yards in Durham-street for a deal less than that—in fact, it is not long since that one was sold for *ninepence*. Besides that, if you unfortunately have a horse killed in the streets it costs you ten shillings to get rid of it. If a boiling-down establishment was once started the majority of the scrubbers would soon be done away with, as there would be a market for them, and the same plant could be used for other things if the pot was not too large.

THE Taranaki Jockey Club meeting took place last Thursday and Friday. The Jockey Club Handicap I must confess surprised me, and I dare say it did many others, as few would have thought of Prestige (7st) getting a mile and a half, beating the field that was behind him. He must have either greatly improved or has been in waiting. Scot Free 8st 7lb, ran a good horse, and it is quite evident now that a left handed course suits him best. The running of Whisper, Krina, and Awarua Rose was not up to expectation, the latter I am afraid is not as good as his popular owner anticipated. Mr. McKinnon—one of our most straightforward sportsmen—had bad luck in again meeting Prestige in the Flying Stakes with Lochness. Mr. Hungerford certainly does not spare his horses, as Heather Bell was started for the Grandstand Handicap, seven furlongs, where she ran second to Weka, and immediately afterwards was pulled out for the Autumn Handicap, one and a quarter miles, in the face of Prestige, who gave a further taste of his quality by defeating her and Scot Free. Whisper and Krina again run badly. Mr. Hungerford managed to pay expenses by winning the Ladies' Bracelet with The Dreamer, who cannot be considered a cheap horse at the £300 he gave for him. Prestige is by St. Leger out of that good mare Fame, and there-