

lowe, Eggar, Raymond and Lawson; Majors Gells and Gordon; Messrs. MacLaine, Birch, Bent, E. Blaxland, Blaxcell, Bayly, J. T. Campbell, Cox, Robert Campbell, Gordon, Lord, Moore, Palmer, Redfern, Riley, Throsby, Wentworth, Mackintosh, W. Wentworth, Fitzgerald, Gore, J. Blaxland, Archer, Oxley, H. M. Arthur, Wiltshire, Loane, Collins, Allan, Hobson, Brodie, and Dr. Carter. These were the gentlemen who constituted the members of the Sydney Race Club in 1813, and I have no doubt some of the "oldest inhabitants" will remember many of the names. The name of Wentworth, I am glad to say, is once more known on the Turf, and long may it continue to be so.

We should like to see some one possessed of an old-time acquaintance with New Zealand racing lore rake up from the library of some true sportsman a copy of the first set of rules ever adopted by a racing club in New Zealand. It would be curious and at the same time interesting reading, we warrant, and we are bold enough to think that some of our turf legislators of this present racing season of 1892-93 would not be above taking a leaf, or several leaves, out of the book of rules laid down by the earliest Turf convocation ever held in New Zealand. And, indeed, they might do so with advantage to themselves, for goodness knows some of their own rules are ambiguous enough in all conscience.

Inter-Provincial

[FROM OWN CORRESPONDENTS.]

WELLINGTON.

December 31.

SOME weeks ago I referred to a rumour in Wellington that a third trotting club was likely to be formed to race at Petone. From what took place at the monthly meeting of the Agricultural and Pastoral Association yesterday it appears that the rumour was well founded. After the transaction of the ordinary business the chairman, Mr W. E. Bidwell, said that private parties who were considering the expediency of forming a trotting club had made informal overtures for the use of the show ground for that purpose. Of course if that were done the grounds would have to be levelled and a track laid down. No doubt a contribution would be received from them towards this purpose, and in consideration of this contribution of course the Association would not let the grounds to any other club. At the same time the Association would make a charge per diem for the use of the grounds. The first question to be determined was whether the grounds should be let for such purposes. In order to prepare the committee for the discussion of the matter at their next meeting he had drafted the following notice of motion:—"That the Association are prepared to lay down a trotting track half a mile in length on the show grounds at Petone provided that the sum of £70 is subscribed by the parties requiring the course and handed to the committee to meet expense of preparing grounds, no additional fencing to be erected, and the sum of £25 per diem to be charged for the use of track and grounds, and that any trotting club accepting the foregoing terms shall have the sole right to hold trotting races only on the show grounds for a period to be mutually agreed upon." The sum of £25 was then voted towards levelling the ground, and the subject dropped.

The news of the death of Mr Hunter's splendid mare Cynisca came with quite a shock to us in Wellington. The mare had become a recognised feature of our Cup meetings, and only lately the principal subject of discussion in local sporting circles was what weight Cynisca would get in our Cup. Several had already backed her. I know one who took £50 to 4 some weeks ago, and there is no doubt that if she had been weighted at anything under 9.7 she would have been made first favourite at once. Mr Hunter's Whisper and Mystic were scratched on Tuesday last for all engagements at our Summer Meeting, so that it is perfectly certain Mr Hunter will not win our Cup this year. He seems to be experiencing a sudden downpour of misfortune, for I am told that Whisper is in such a condition that it is ten to one she will never race again.

[The above letter reached us too late for publication last week owing to the Post Office holidays.—ED.]

January 6.

It is indicative of the prosperous condition of the Wellington district at the present time that all the country race meetings held lately have been exceptionally successful. At the Wairarapa Racing Club's Summer Meeting, held on Monday and Tuesday last, the attendance was larger than it has ever been; the amount put through the totalisator was

£7033 against £6085 last year, and the improvements on the course represented an outlay of about £700. At the Otaki-Maori Racing Club Meeting on Monday it was the same. The attendance was the best on record; the totalisator investments reached £2100, or £400 more than the highest previous total, and the income from privileges, admission money, nomination and acceptance fees, showed a substantial increase. Although there were two meetings held in the Wairarapa on Boxing Day, viz., the Masterton-Opaki and the Lower Valley, both gatherings were financially successful. When we compare this state of things with the doleful accounts which reach us from the South Island—of large deficits in the totalisator returns and general failure of revenue—we have much cause for self-congratulation that the depression which is so apparent elsewhere has not reached us. Our Metropolitan meeting will be held in less than three weeks, and there is every prospect of it being a bumper success, if we may judge from the number of entries for the Wellington Cup and Racing Club Handicap, which are unprecedentedly large.

Mr Evett's handicap for the Wellington Cup came to hand on Wednesday evening. The first think that strikes me is that only one of our local horses has a ghost of a show, and that one is Mr Freeth's Revolution, 7.12. It will be remembered that at the Wellington Spring Meeting the principal race was spoilt by this horse being thrown in with 8.0. He won then, and has kept on winning since, and now he gets 7.12. The other day he met Senator at Opaki, and beat him over the same distance at 2st, the respective weights being 9.7 and 7.7. Now Senator is set to meet him at 12lb. No wonder Mr Tancred scratched his horse as soon as he saw the weights. Swordbelt 7.10, Retina 7.7, Osman 7.3, Musket 7.2, and Legislator 6.12, are all held safe by Revolution. Another palpable mistake, to my mind, has been made in giving Stepniak only 8.7. This horse in the C.J.C. Derby cut out the same distance with 8.10 in 2min 40½sec, beating the crack three-year-old of the year St. Hippo. Between November and January he is supposed to improve 5lb. If well on the day he ought therefore to make very merry time with 8lb improvement on his Derby form. How would St. Hippo look with 8.12? I think he would be a warm favourite, and probably win; and where St. Hippo would be with 8.12 there must Stepniak be with 8.7. Of the top weights I think Merrie England, 8.7, has been most leniently treated, and on his running in the Consolation at Dunedin Spring he should hold Prime Warden safe at 7lb. Rosefeldt, with 8.2, is fancied by some, but I do not believe she can give 11b to Revolution. Cretonne, 7.11, is about fairly placed, and so is Thame with 7.7. Crown Jewel, 7.5, has been running very badly lately, but if her party have been waiting they have a good thing, for she has 11lb less than when she cut out the same distance in the Burke Memorial Stakes in 2min 38 4-5sec. The next one I like is Loch Ness, 7.4, for if the Press Association's description of the Auckland R.C. Handicap is correct he might have won had his run been made a bit sooner. Of the light weight the only ones I take to have a chance are Krina 6.11, Wyvern 6.8, and the ex-hack Ngati-oma 6.7. I look upon Stepniak, Revolution, Merrie England, Cretonne, Crown Jewel, Thame, Loch Ness and Krina, as being the pick of the handicap, and to select two at the present time I should take Revolution and Stepniak.

The Wellington Trotting Club have received excellent entries for their Summer Meeting, which is to take place at Island Bay on the 24th instant, and one thing noticeable about them is that with very few exceptions they are all well known horses, so that Mr King should not have much difficulty in framing the handicaps which are due on Wednesday next. The absence of the name of Prince II., winner of the Johnsonville and Hutt County Trotting Club Handicap, is generally remarked. By the way the protests against this horse receiving the stakes for this race and another that he won at the same meeting are still in abeyance. The nominator has been ordered to submit the horse for inspection, but has not done so up to the present.

The stewards and members of the Otaki Maori Racing Club met on Tuesday last, and discussed the suggestion of the Metropolitan Club that they should amalgamate with the Horowhenua Jockey Club, whose course surrounds their own. A resolution was passed declining the alliance, but expressing the willingness of the club to send a deputation to the

Metropolitan stewards to explain their reasons for wishing to carry on by themselves. I am convinced that this resolution is final, and that if the Metropolitan stewards use their power to try to compel them to amalgamate, the only result will be that the Maoris will break up their club. At present they are proud of their position as the only genuine Maori club in the colony, and as they can justly claim that their meetings are conducted in quite as orderly a manner as those of their European neighbours, they will not submit to any undue interference. The position they have taken up is a very dignified one, and in spite of the letter which has been sent to them by the Metropolitan Club containing a covert threat, I do not think the latter body will push things to extremes.

Mr Whiteman's bay mare Jenny Lind, by Grand Duke, a mare well known in the Wairarapa, was purchased the other day by a party of Wellington sports, and will in future be trained at the Hutt.

A. Peters, who trains at the Hutt and who has not had too many of fortune's favours extended to him, was well to the fore at Otaki on Monday, winning the principal race, the Glasgow Stakes (handicap) of 60sovs, 1½ miles, with Mr Harland's Houp-la, by Remington—Beauty Bright, and the Flying Stakes with Luna, a five-year-old mare by Deception. Houp-la had previously won the Christmas Handicap at Marton, and was on this account made a great favourite at Otaki, where he won hard held from Ben Bolt and Huia. Houp-la is developing into a very useful horse, and should he take kindly to the jumping game, he is just the cut of which winners of Grand Nationals are made. Another horse which showed at the meeting and won the Maiden Hurdles and the w.f.a. Boyle Plate, will in all probability have a distinguished future. This is Mr H. Parata's b g Primus, by Natator out of a Day Dawn mare. He stands about 15.3, and shows a lot of quality and symmetry with a most intelligent head and very powerful quarters; in fact, he looked a thorough racehorse, and will prove himself one if I mistake not. He was bred by the late Mr H. H. Harrison at Wanganui, and has passed through several hands owing to his intractability. McMorran has been training him lately, and seems to have tamed him down.

At the Wairarapa Meeting there was excellent sport, but no sensational occurrences. The Cup looked a good thing for Mr Tancred's Senator, 7.0, but although he ran well he was fairly outstayed by the Natator mare Viola II., who has hitherto shown to advantage as a hurdler, and was fairly pitchforked into the handicap with 6.7—a great liberty to take with an aged Natator mare. Mr W. Best's Osman, by Crawford Priory—Ruth, who had won at Lower Valley with 7.12, was greatly fancied here, although he had 8.10, but he failed to stay home. The principal race on the second day, the Wairarapa J.C. Handicap, fell to the favourite, Mr J. Freeth's Violence, who, with 8.0 and H. Reed up, just succeeded in beating the unlucky Senator 7.5. As often happens in the Wellington district, the hack races were the most popular races of the meeting. On the Hack Flying on the second day there was £639 invested, while on the R.C. Handicap there was only £591. Mr W. E. Bidwell's Donovan won the former and paid £14 3s. dividend. There was a lot of gnashing of teeth on the part of those who had neglected the good thing. It is a paying item to go upon at all Wairarapa meetings to back Freeth and Bidwell Bros. Both keep nothing but good cattle, and very seldom run anything that is not fit.

January 10th.

When the general entries were opened on Friday night, the secretary of the Wellington Racing Club was astonished to find that a large number of expected nominations were missing, and the list, when published, caused general surprise by its meagreness. There was nothing from Mr Ormond and nothing from Mr Freeth, two of the staunchest supporters of the club. The poorness of the entries was the subject of general comment during Saturday, and in the afternoon it became known that a serious *contretemps* had occurred. The gentleman who rents the private post-office box above that of Mr Lyon, the secretary, is absent in Dunedin, and had left instructions for all correspondence to be forwarded to an address in that city. By mistake, the notice which is usually placed on the box for the guidance of the sorters, was placed on Mr Lyon's box instead of on that of the absent gentleman, and one of the sorters did not notice the mistake,

and sent on a lot of Mr Lyon's correspondence, which included several letters and delayed telegrams containing nominations for the races. Of course these could not be got back by the time specified for closing entries, and there was general consternation among owners of the missing entries, and telegrams, asking the reason of their horses not appearing in the lists, poured in during the day. On Monday the New Zealand Times had an article strongly recommending that the entries should be received, as they were virtually to hand at the proper time. The stewards held a meeting at noon the same day, and passed the following resolution:—"That all nominations bearing Wellington postmark of the 6th inst. before 9 p.m., and which have been accidentally sent on by the post-office officials to Dunedin shall, under the circumstances, be taken as having been received in due time in accordance with the published programme." It was also resolved that as the letters and telegrams missent cannot be received back in Wellington before Wednesday the handicaps which are due on that day shall not be declared until Thursday. General satisfaction is expressed with the action of the stewards, only a few owners being wrath at having the opposition to their horses strengthened, illegally as they say, but it is not expected that any serious trouble will ensue. At any rate, the meeting would have been seriously injured had the entries been rejected.

There has been some betting on the Wellington Cup during the last few days. Stepniak is favourite at 6 to 1, and punters are backing him freely, though nothing is known as to whether he will come here. Revolution is second favourite at 100 to 12, and Crown Jewel, Krina, Crackshot, and Awarua Rose are all fancied.

The Johnsonville Trotting Club will hold a meeting to-morrow night to decide upon the preliminaries of the enquiry which is to be held into the identity of Prince II., the winner of the Club and Spring Handicaps at their recent meeting. It is generally thought there will be a difficulty about the production of the horse, in which case there will be disqualifications flying round.

Turf Topics.

[BY "SIR LAUNCELOT."]

The payments to owners over the Auckland Racing Club's Summer Meeting totalled £4104, of which Mr. L. D. Nathan took £1330. Of this amount the Auckland Cup represented £527 5s, and the Great Northern Derby £413 5s. The Auckland Steeplechase was worth £264 5s to Mr. W. Paul, and the Racing Club Handicap £332 10s to Mr. V. Harris.

In an article on sport in 1892, the *Australasian* says:—"Taken all round racing has by comparison fared worse than any other form of sport during 1892. The suburban clubs must have been hard put to make both ends meet. We think some of them can hardly have succeeded this far, and should the V.R.C. adopt Mr. Cowell's very sensible suggestion with regard to Saturday racing at Flemington and Caulfield, it will be even more difficult for the proprietary courses to live during 1893. It is a sign of the times when we hear of the V.R.C. casting round for the means of replenishing its exchequer. When it was known that the Spring Meeting had panned out badly we suggested the abolition of sweeps in all races and the imposition of entrance and acceptance fees to go to the race fund. The committee have discussed the advisability of availing themselves of this means of making revenue, and, although they have not absolutely decided on its adoption, we think the feeling of a majority is in favour of reverting to some such method of averting a general reduction in stakes. By taking the entrance monies and running a few Saturday meetings the V.R.C. may be able to avoid cutting down stakes, but the falling off in the receipts this year is a warning that something must be done. Apart from a general decline in the prosperity of the various clubs in Victoria, 1892 cannot be said to have been a remarkable year as far as turf history is concerned. The A.J.C. had no cricket to contend against on the holidays, and their receipts should come up to the anticipated total. During the Spring Meeting, however, the public regarded Randwick with a very cold eye, and if they would not patronise head-quarters depend upon it they have also been none too liberal with the smaller fixtures. Queensland and South Australia have the totalisator to assist in propping up their revenue, and consequently the leading clubs are not so dependent on the gate, but even in these colonies times have not been any too brisk, and we are not likely to hear any talk of increased stakes. Tasmania has possibly held its own, and Western Australia must have strengthened its position from a racing point of view, but in New Zealand things are not so bright. There is no doubt that some of the leaders of the Metropolitan Clubs seriously think that owing to over-racing the totalisator is in danger, and should the machine be abolished racing in Maoriland is likely to deteriorate rapidly."

As I have heard that some unscrupulous persons have been travelling to race meetings in different parts of the colony falsely representing themselves as being connected with the SPORTING REVIEW, it would in future be as well for clubs' secretaries to satisfy themselves as to the bona fides of any person applying for admission in the interests of this journal.