

As I have hinted above I expect the weight to stop Torpedo in the last furlong, and therefore I shall divide my vote between Swordbelt and Free Lance.

The entries for the Hurdle Handicap of 100sovs, 2 miles, numbered but six—why so small an entry was rather puzzling—and four have accepted. They are not by any means a brilliant lot, but from what I know of them I should think the top weight, Paradox, 10.9, would be equal to the task of getting home.

The Hack Hurdle Handicap of 30sovs, one mile and a half, has an acceptance of seven, and from little I know of the form of those engaged I look to Houp La to win.

Next comes the item of the programme, the Wellington Cup of 400sovs, together with a piece of plate of the value of 100sovs, one mile and a-half. An acceptance of but 11 out of 51 entered originally cannot be considered satisfactory.

But let us look at what has dropped out before proceeding to consider the prospects of those left in Merganser was the first defection from the original handicap, and then we come to Prime Warden, whose party are evidently waiting for Dunedin, which is nearer home for them. A good many backers burnt their fingers over Stopniak, but they have only themselves to blame, as they knew that he had but recently hit himself in a gallop, and therefore was hardly likely to be well enough so soon. I threw out a note of warning in this direction last week, when I reviewed the handicap.

Kulnine was hardly expected to make the journey from Christchurch, and Fraternite is, as far as I know, still on the sick list. The journey is a bit too far for Hippomenes, as I pointed out when reviewing the handicap, and the fact of Mr McKinnon scratching Scot Free and leaving Loch Ness in shows which he considers the best in at the weights. Johnny Faa is a cripple, but I thought Cretonne would have accepted. However his owner has left Boulanger in, despite the vigorous denunciations of the Wanganui scribes as to the way Mr Evett had handicapped him through Crackshot.

Sword Belt's owner evidently prefers the shorter races on the day, and so does the owner of Free Lance. Dilemma, Thame, North Atlantic, and Strephon are under suspicion, so their absence is easily accounted for. St. Katherine's owner intends having a cut in for some of the shorter races at the meeting. Awarua Rose hurt himself in the N.Z. Cup race, but Crown Jewel was nicely handicapped, and her absence leads me to the conclusion that she cannot be quite herself just now.

Whakawatea we know to be "off colour," and as Saracen is trained in the same stable as Prime Warden, it is fair to presume that he, too, is holding off pending Dunedin Cup time. The non-acceptors below Saracen can easily be accounted for, and none of them would, in all probability, have affected the result.

So that after all, perhaps, the 11 that have been paid up for are nearly as many as we could expect. The handicapper is, of course, not responsible for the crippled state of several of the competitors, nor for the fact that there was a terrible lot of mediocre horses engaged. Now let me come to the point though, and deal with those that are left in. Last week, in commencing my review of the handicap, I expressed myself thusly with regard to Boulanger, who now heads the list of acceptors:—"Boulanger, up to the present season though showing himself to be a brilliant horse up to a mile and a-quarter, did not seem to relish the task of getting further than that, but he rather unexpectedly stayed out the New Zealand Cup distance so far as to get into a place with 8.4 up. A knock, however, debarred him from starting again at the C.J.C.'s meeting, so we are left in ignorance as to his prospects and present condition. But if he be landed fit and well at the post I shall have him on my side."

At the weights given him I certainly thought Cretonne was well in, but as Mr Paul has taken him out and left Boulanger in, I shall certainly have the latter on my side now. In reviewing the whole handicap in the last issue of the SPORTING REVIEW, I picked a septette to supply the winner, of which four remain in, viz.:—Crackshot, Rosefeldt, Revolution, and Loch Ness; and adding Boulanger to these, I shall place

Crackshot 1
Rosefeldt 2
Boulanger 3

with Revolution close up. Out of seven entries for the Nursery Handicap of 100sovs, 6 furlongs, there are six acceptors. In giving Westmere 9.0, I think Mr Evett gave this real good colt every possible chance. Noyade,

7.7, has already won this season, and seems snartish. Busybody, 7.8, was a strong tip for the C.J.C. Welcome Stake weeks before it came off, but she did not run up to expectations. Persuasion, 7.8, on the score of being a full sister to Cajolery, should be fast, but I shall stick to public form and go for Westmere, and Noyade and Busybody may fill the other places.

After a Hack Handicap comes the Welter Handicap of 80sovs, one mile and a quarter. Torpedo is top weight with 9.12, but he may have had a race out of him, added to which I think the journey is a bit too far for him. Bay King, 9.7, generally runs well under welter weights, and I look upon him as very dangerous now. Others I am partial to are Paradox, 8.10, and Revolt, 8.4, and I shall vote for Bay King, with Revolt second, and Paradox third.

There are nine acceptors for the Telegraph Handicap of 100sovs, 6 furlongs, with which the day's sport concludes, and as the majority of them have engagements earlier in the day, it is very hard to pick it. At the present weights, however, I like Dreamland and Loch Ness best, and one of these may win.

I cannot deal with the events of the Wednesday, because the handicaps are not due till mid-day on Tuesday.

TAKAPUNA JOCKEY CLUB'S SUMMER MEETING.

This meeting commences on Saturday week, the 28th instant, and will be continued on the following Monday. The entries for the minor handicaps on the first day closed on Friday last, and Mr Knight had his handicaps out punctual to time on Monday. As the acceptances and general entries are due to-morrow it is unnecessary for me to make any very lengthy remarks on the handicaps at present, so I shall content myself with a few words. The entries for the smaller races are, I may say, very satisfactory, there being 14 in the Maiden Plate, 13 in the Hurdles, 15 in the Zealandia Handicap, 14 in the Handicap Maiden Steeplechase, 8 in the Calliope Handicap, 13 in the Borough Handicap, and 18 in the Stewards' Handicap.

In the Maiden Plate, one mile, Waltzer at 8.12 has not, I think, an ounce too much, but Stanley, 8.0, should have been asked to concede weight to Sir Roland, instead of being put on the same mark with him. Transit and King Cannibal, too, are a pair that should have at least, in my opinion, been evenly weighted with Sir Roland, if not put above him. Those below King Cannibal are certainly moderate enough in all conscience, and all in I think Waltzer, with 8.12, can beat the lot, excepting perhaps Stanley and Muriel.

In the Hurdle Handicap, two miles, Fishmonger heads the poll at 11.4, and certainly that is quite as much as he deserves. I like Aorere far belter at 10.12, and I think whatever beats him will win. Marechal Neil, 10.10, is raised 19lb on the weight he carried to victory at Ellerslie in the New Year Hurdle Race; Belmont, who was unplaced, is kept at the same weight, and Fishmonger, who was second, is raised 8lb. This looks like scientific handicapping, but though perhaps it may be, I think Marechal Neil has the best of it because he is a more improving horse than the others. Aorere did not start in this same New Year Hurdle Race, and so we cannot well judge of him through the others, but, on the form he has shown us this season, I must repeat my opinion that whatever beats him now will win. In addition to Marechal Neil Rae has another representative in his stable in the shape of Isidore, a horse he brought up on his return from the N.Z. Cup Meeting. I have seen this horse run down South, and on that form I do not look on him as dangerous now because I think some of the 9.7 division can beat him easily, and he is asked to give them 5lb. Tupara, 9.7, though by no means brilliant, is one that I think will beat him, and so may Bombardier. But the pair I pick at present to supply the winner are Aorere and Marechal Neil.

St. Clements is brilliant enough over a five furlongs course, but I think Mr Knight has been a bit too hard on him in giving him 9.10 in the Zealandia Handicap. I do not care for Warrior at 8.4, nor Lady Belle at 8.2, but I am very partial to His Worship at 7.12, and Waltzer at the same impost, but the latter may run for the Maiden. Tamar should get a nice five furlongs with 7.8 if she be in the humour, and Marguerite has more than an outside chance. If I had to make a definite tip now I should say that the

places will be filled by His Worship, Waltzer and Marguerite.

The 14 that are in the Handicap Maiden Steeplechase, three miles, should furnish a most exciting contest. The handicap was a somewhat difficult one to make, and I think Mr Knight has performed his task well. The trio I prefer at the weights are Nero, Maritana, and Blue Ribbon.

Eve has well earned the 9.2 allotted her in the two-year-old event of the day, the Calliope Handicap, five furlongs. But though I think she will, if started, run a big race, I reckon Captivity or Royal Rose will beat her, Captivity for choice. I do not understand why Ben Godfrey, who has never run, is asked to give two untried ones like the Brigadier filly and Jennie 18lb.

I will not say anything about the Borough Handicap of six furlongs, because most of those in it have other engagements at the meeting, and the same remark in a lesser measure applies to the Stewards' Handicap, six and a-half furlongs. At this distance Mr Knight has discreetly taken 5lb off the weight he gave St. Clements at five furlongs, but I think more than one of those below him would have proved his master had he been started, which there is no probability of his being after the accident he met with on Tuesday, as recorded in another column. I like Warrior and His Worship at 7.12 and 7.8 respectively—whichever Mr "B. Thompson" elects to send, and Waltzer, 7.8, again strikes my eye, but the race is best left alone till next week, when I shall have the acceptances to guide me.

NEWMARKET HANDICAP.

THE declaration of the weights for the Newmarket Handicap and Australian Cup are always anxiously awaited in Auckland, and this year, more than ever perhaps, was particular interest evinced therein because we all wanted to see how our crack colt St. Hippo was assessed by Mr Dakin, and in addition to him there were Quadrant, Merganser, Regel, and Miss Letty from this neighborhood all engaged in the Newmarket. But, of course, it was St. Hippo that we were principally concerned about, and now that we have seen what Mr Dakin thinks about him, I think we can say that the colt is extremely nicely handicapped, especially in the Australian Cup. But it is with the Newmarket Handicap that I must deal first.

Bungebah has the post of honor with 10.1, and he is such a brilliant horse over six furlongs that I really do not think he has a pound too much. It must be remembered that with 10.0 Boz ran second to Churchill in this same race, and without disparaging Boz, I think I may safely say that Bungebah is more brilliant than he. When Bungebah won the Newmarket Handicap a couple of seasons ago he had 9.3 in the saddle. Last year his weight was 10.4, and he finished unplaced behind Wild Rose, 8.1. The mare now goes up 15lb, and Bungebah is taken down 3lb. I like the old horse's show with all his weight, but it must be remembered that he is at an age when he is more likely to retrograde than improve. Ascot Vale (as will be seen by the report appearing in another column) broke the Victorian six furlongs record on New Year's Day by winning the Standish Handicap. Weight doesn't stop good 'uns at three-quarters of a mile, and therefore I cannot but regard Ascot Vale's claim with favour. Ditto Autonomy, 9.8, whose forte in my opinion is undoubtedly brilliancy. He cannot stay, but he certainly can skip over six furlongs or a mile very merrily. With Autonomy in at 9.8—which by the way is exactly a stone over his weight for age—I take St. Hippo to be well dealt by with 4lb less, but it is hardly worth while seriously discussing his chance for the reason that the V.R.C. St. Leger is run on the same day, and it is pretty well certain that that will be his mission. Fortunatus, 9.2, has 23lb more than when he ran second to Wild Rose in the same race last year, which means that he meets her on 8lb worse terms for the beating he then received, which at first sight seems peculiar, but it must be remembered that he has put up some sterling performances since then, whereas the mare has not, and the colt is more likely to improve with age. However, I think both Bungebah and Ascot Vale hold last year's winner and runner-up safe. Donizetti, 9.1, came with a big reputation from Queensland some time ago, but never did anything to uphold it, and I will have none of him. Chatham was supposed to be a good thing for the Carlington Stakes in Sydney the other day,

but he "went down" therein, and though he won Tattersall's Club Cup, I will pass him by now. Pilot Boy, 8.13, does not commend himself to me, neither will I have Hopetoun at the same weight, for I fancy he prefers a longer journey. Etra Weenie as a Maribyrnong Plate, and V.R.C. Oaks winner is entitled to respect at 8.12. Lord Hopetoun, 8.11, was certainly a most brilliant two-year-old, and though an unlucky horse he has occasionally shown flashes of brilliancy since then, and on New Year's Day he was Ascot Vale's most immediate attendant at the finish of the Standish Handicap. Linburn, 8.11, and Azim, 8.10, I pass by, but Gresford, 8.10, will have a good word from me. Our New Zealand representative Merganser is by no means harshly dealt by at 8.8, and fit and well at the post I would not mind backing her at outside prices, but I shall want to see her over there and doing good work before I further estimate her chance. Antæus, 8.8, has not long enough recovered from his injuries to be able to do himself justice. Sainfoin, 8.8, has run one or two good sprint races, but I must decline to stand him. Gladstone, Prime Minister, and Quadrant constitute the 8.7 division. Gladstone has since he won the Normanby Stakes as a two-year-old got lower and lower down till we find him lately in the ranks of the se'ling platers, so surely he cannot have much chance. Several rumours have reached here as to Prime Minister, who I know has been a strong tip to several people in New Zealand. I know nothing of his capabilities myself further than are disclosed by his last year's performances, and turning those up I find that he ran in ten races last season, winning a couple. At Brisbane Tattersall's Spring he carried 7.12 to the front in the Fairfield Handicap, 7 furlongs, beating a field of nine. He ran third to Splendide and Babel in the Queensland Derby a month later, but with 7.9 did not get placed behind Babel, 7.8, in the Sandgate Handicap, one mile and a quarter. He was then put by till the "fall" of the season, when he was badly beaten in the Queensland Leger. Nor did he do any better in the weight-for-age Royal Stakes of a mile and a quarter, but at Toowoomba (Q.) during the first week in June he beat half a dozen in the Clifford Plate, one mile, carrying 8.8. Next day Splendide, 8.9, only did him a head—he carrying 8.3—in the Town Plate, about nine furlongs, and this was I think the best performance he did. At the Southern Downs (Q.) meeting, the following week he twice ran second in what, on collateral form, seems to me very moderate company. I expect that a good many people who are supporting him, and have supported him, are taking their cue from the fact that he is a half-brother to that great racehorse The Australian Peer, and that is on what they have chiefly made up their minds, but his performances certainly do not warrant my recommending him in any way as a likely winner of this year's Newmarket Handicap. There is tolerably certain to be a "rod in pickle" somewhere, but I cannot see how he can be that rod. I should think Mr Bobbett will not grumble at Quadrant getting off with 8.7, but, on the contrary, that he will soon be up and moving with him. If he be well on the day I'm sure he will run a great race, for his past performances have made him out a brilliant horse at this distance. Dan O'Connor, 8.6, was a brilliant two-year-old, but has not done much this season. Passing by Newcastle, 8.5, of whom I know next to nothing, I come to the 8.3 division, which comprises The Swell, Steadfast, Malolo, Biringi, Happy Jack, Magic Circle and Ravenswing, and of these I certainly like The Swell and Magic Circle best. The latter's performances at the end of last season were certainly not encouraging, but I do not forget that as a three-year-old she was second best to The Admiral in the V.R.C. Derby, and second best to Litigant in the V.R.C. Oaks. The Swell last season won the Winter Stakes of a mile and a quarter at the Sydney Tattersall's Winter Meeting, and is, I fancy, entitled to great respect. He is, like Magic Circle, in a "dangerous" stable—one of those that it is always well to keep a watchful eye upon about Newmarket Handicap time. I have no fancy for either Swordbearer, 8.2, nor Hero, 8.1; but Warpaint is a nag of another colour. He is a three-year-old son of Chester and Wheel of Fortune (full sister to Abercorn's dam Cinnamon), and is owned by the "J. B. Clark" syndicate. He ran well last season, and being in such a stable as that presided over by T. Payten should be worth watching. So should Trenton's daughter Gaillardia,