

Auckland Trotting Club's Autumn Meeting.

SATURDAY, APRIL 15.

The Auckland Trotting Club were very fortunate in the matter of weather on Saturday last, and they had a capital attendance. The fields were good in the majority of the seven events on the card, but the sport was not of a particularly interesting nature, and the proceedings dragged somewhat. Mr. W. Blomfield's assistants—he himself being absent in Australia—handled £2027 at the totalisators, the tickets being 10s in each race, except the April Handicap Trot, in which they were £1 inside and 10s out, and the Autumn Handicap, in which they were £1 all round, and two separate dividends were paid in the case of the April Trot.

There were but three absentees from the Maiden Trot Handicap of 40sovs, 2 miles, which left the big field of 17. There was not very much speculation indulged in, and several of the competitors did not carry a single farthing. Dinah, 18sec—only 6sec less than the limit—was served up a warm favourite, and justified the confidence reposed in her by winning easily from The Broker, 20sec, and Disappointment, 18sec.

Gillie, Siwash and Retrenched were eliminated from the Flying Handicap of 35sovs, 5 furlongs, which left ten to go to the post. Although she had top weight of 10.5 backers fastened on to Cupid, and she left off a slightly better favourite than Pearl II., 7.10, while Rodney, 8.7, was also well backed. Rodney had got through his field by the end of a quarter of a mile, and coming on full of running he won comfortably from Venus Victrix, 8.3, including 7lb over, and Pearl II. With 8.0 Rodney started favourite for this same race last year, but could not get a place behind Contempt, 7.0.

The big event of the day, the April Handicap Trot of 130sovs, two miles and a half, next came up for decision. Little Ben and Otakehe were the only withdrawals, leaving a dozen starters. The Taranaki horse Peter, with the minimum of 60sec, and "Jay" Russell up, was installed favourite, but Black Oats, 45sec, trotted closely on his heels in the betting. Bar these two there was nothing backed with much spirit. There was a bit of a rush to get a peep at the Canterbury representative Black Oats, whose handicapping had been in some quarters a great bone of contention, but she looked very mean, and a lot of her would-be backers deserted her as soon as they saw her. When the word "go" was given Peter made the most of his advantage, and by the time they passed the stand he had a good lead. Hurricane, 53sec, had got into second place, and Martha, 60sec, Model, 55sec, and Mount, 50sec, followed in that order. When they had gone along the back stretch Peter was supplanted by Hurricane, who was in the van when they again passed the stand, but Peggy, 45sec, had drawn up second, and Mount, 50sec, was third, and Black Oats, 45sec, next. Hurricane kept on the even tenor of his way, and when they reached the stand before entering on the final round he had a good lead of Peggy and Mount, and Yum Yum (who started at scratch), had pulled up a lot of ground, but she broke several times. Mount took second place at the back of the course, but he could never place the issue in doubt, and Hurricane won by about 50 yards from him. Black Oats was a very moderate third, and Peggy headed the others. The time, 7min 9 2-5sec, was in marked contrast to last year's 7min 48sec, when the race was won by Little Ben, 56sec. The dividend on the inside totalisator was £9 9s, and on the outside £11 14s.

The whole dozen ponies coloured on the card for the Autumn Handicap of 50sovs, 7 furlongs, came to the post. Gillie, who carried 4lb over, bringing his weight up to 9.4, was a hot favourite, and Pearl II., 7.11, inc. 4lb over, and La Grippe, 9.3, were better supported than any of the others. The race is easily described, for Pearl II. was very quick at beginning, and after Dove had led her for a few yards, she came on and won easily from Gillie, 9.4, and Nigger Boy, 9.5. Balderdash, Model, and Teddy were taken out of the Harness Handicap Trot of 50sovs, 2 miles, and nine thus constituted the strength of the field. The bulk of backers' money went to Sparrowhawk, 60sec, and Peter, 52sec, Sparrowhawk having a slight call. Passing the stand the first time Cadiz, 60sec, was leading, with Scotchman and Peter as his nearest attendants. Cadiz went on with the lead all the way round, and when the stand was again reached he was in front, with

Scotchman second, Peter third, and Sparrowhawk next, followed by Clyde, who had been gradually getting through and was going great guns. Scotchman took the lead from Cadiz at the back of the course, but he was moving at rather a peculiar gait, but coming on he won by about three lengths from Cadiz, with Clyde a close third. When they returned to scale a protest was entered against Scotchman on the ground that he had not trotted fairly. The stewards took the evidence of the three "judges of trotting" appointed by them, and as these gentlemen, Messrs A. R. Harris, J. S. Kidd, and J. Hunter gave it as their opinion that Scotchman had not trotted fairly, the stakes were awarded to Cadiz. They also decided to caution Trubshaw, the driver of Hurricane, for not having taken a proper pull at his horse under the rules. As soon as their decision was announced, Mr G. McBride, the owner of Scotchman, gave notice to the stewards not to pay over the stakes or the totalisator money. However the totalisator paid out as usual, the backers of Cadiz receiving the nice dividend of £8 5s for every 10s.

Half-a-dozen weighed out for the Handicap Hurdles of 40sovs, one mile and a-half, Siwash being the only defector. Butterfly, 11.0, was favourite, but Reuben, 10.7, and Little Raven, 9.10, also met with plenty of support. The favourite was responsible for most of the running till about a quarter of a mile from home, when Little Raven, who had always been on the premises, took command. Reuben essayed to catch him in the last furlong, but he held his own to the end, and won by half-a-length from Reuben. Venus Victrix was a moderate third.

The afternoon's sport concluded with the Electric Handicap Trot of 50sovs, one mile, for which eight were saddled, Ladybird and Black Oats declining the contest. Most money was put on Nellie, 16sec, probably because B. Edwards was up on her, but Mount (who had the limit of 21sec) and Yum Yum, who was at scratch, had a lot of friends. None of the others were much fancied, however. Mount kept in front all the way, and won by about three lengths from Yum Yum, who trotted a great mare. Nellie was a moderate third.

The various officers discharged their duties most efficiently, and time would have been well kept up to had it not been for the protest over the Harness Trot. Mr E. D. Halstead, who generally wields the flag for the club, was present, looking bad after his severe bout of illness, and he was too unwell to assume the role of starter, but Mr E. M. Page made a most efficient substitute. The £2,027 passed through the totalisators was £222 10s less than was handled at the same meeting last year.

At the settling the sums paid to winning owners were:—W. H. Trubshaw, £95; W. J. Greenwood, £66 10s; W. Brinsden, £42 15s; E. Archibald, £42 15s; T. May, £38; J. Gibbs, £33 5s; H. Hughson, £28 10s; B. Edwards, £9 10s; E. G. Sandall, £4 15s; E. Hoult, £4 15s; R. Moore, £4 15s; J. Martin, £4 15s; total, £375 3s.

Wellington Racing Club's Autumn Meeting.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE Wellington Racing Club's Autumn Meeting was held on Wednesday and Thursday last week. The weather was favourable on both days, but the attendance did not exceed 1,400 on the first day and 1,000 on the second day. Among the visitors I noticed the Hons. Captain Russell and J. D. Ormond of Napier, Dr. Connolly of Wanganui, and Major and Mrs George of Auckland. The general arrangements were excellent, and punctuality was strictly observed on both days. The new stewards' stand, which also contains the weighing-room, stewards' room, secretary's office, telegraph office, and press room, was used for the first time, and except that the press room is altogether too small, was found a great improvement on the old regime. The siding which has been made for the purpose of starting mile races on a straight run, instead of on a curve, was also used for the first time in the Thompson Handicap, and it not only gives a better view of the send-off from the stand, but enables the starter to do his work much more satisfactorily than before. Though the meeting was held under such favourable auspices it was not a complete success. The acceptances for the Thompson Handicap—only eight—showed very poorly against the sixteen of last year, and the two new races, the

Derby Handicap for three-year-olds and Heretaunga Handicap for two and three-year-olds, were both arrant failures, the former being reduced to a race between three, and the latter to a match between the two two-year-olds Westmere and Porepo. The collapse of the Derby Handicap is difficult to explain. The stake is £150, and yet there were only eight entries, and of these North Atlantic and Senator were *hors de combat*, and did not come; and as the owners of Revolt and Legislator did not think their horses had any chance they scratched them, and thus left in only Stepniak 9.7, St. Katherine 8.11, Wakawatea 8.9, and Monte Carlo 6.10. St. Katherine was scratched, I do not know for what reason, on the morning of the race, and only three came to the post. The failure of the Heretaunga Handicap was, there is no doubt, mainly due to the very eccentric handicap made by Mr Evett. A sample of his mistakes may be given. In the Juvenile Handicap, six furlongs, on the first day, Westmere won easily, carrying 9.5, and beating Porepo, 7.0, Lakeshell, 7.12, and Noyade 8.11. In the Heretaunga Handicap, 5 furlongs, Westmere was weighted at 9.0, while Lakeshell and Porepo had the same weights as the day before. Thus both had to meet Westmere on 5lbs worse terms for being beaten. The result was that only three out of twelve accepted, and as one of these failed to appear at the post, the race resolved into a match. The Club on this occasion had the same experience in connection with the totalisator investments as most of the other Metropolitan Clubs have had recently. The total put through was £9,929 as against £12,416 put through at last year's Autumn Meeting, thus showing a decrease of no less than £2,487. This is a poor recompense to the Club for increasing the stakes. Notwithstanding these drawbacks the meeting will yield a small profit, and as the Club is in a good financial position there is no harm done, especially as the improvements have all been provided for.

And now for a short review of the racing.

The Trial Handicap of 50sovs, one mile, the opening event, brought out six moderates, and the favourite, Mr D. Knight's Prioress, —a three-year-old daughter of Puriri and Voltarina, won somewhat easily from Mr Freeth's handsome Treason colt Revolt, who spoilt his chance by bolting before the race and playing up generally.

In the Hurdle Handicap Aorere, the top weight, with 11.7, was made a hot favourite, and displaying much better form than he has shown up your way lately, won very easily from Bide-a-wee, 10.0, who scored at Tauherenikau the other day. Disturbance, 10.7, was one of the runners, and although he was well backed by the public his running was of such a peculiar character that very uncomplimentary remarks were made by those who had backed him. The handicapper's opinion was plainly expressed when the weights appeared for the second day, as Disturbance, who had run last the first day, was raised 5lb. He accepted, and ran again, and his performance was eagerly watched, but after running prominently for a mile he died away and finished in the rear. The local horse Jacob, by Natator, who has been on the shelf for a long time, but who came out and won the Hurdle Race on the second day at the Wairarapa Meeting, was scratched on Wednesday, but on Thursday accepted with the same weight, 9.9, and won comfortably from Aorere, who although burdened with 12.6, was again made favourite.

The Hack Hurdles on the first day was considered a good thing for Primus, 9.10, but, like Disturbance, he did not appear to be in a hurry, and the race fell to Mr F. Seccombe's Jimmy, 9.12, who also won at the Wairarapa Meeting. Mr Prosser's Pumau, 9.7, would have won but for hitting one of the hurdles and losing so much ground that he could only get second. He had his revenge next day, when he was made favourite and won easily.

All the eight acceptances came out for the Thompson Handicap, and all were well supported, The Workman, 9.3, being the favourite, and Stranger, 7.0, the outsider of the party. Mr Stead's Melinite, 4yrs, 8.0, was second favourite, but both in this race and in the Autumn Handicap she ran like a jade, and showed no form at all. The Workman, Thame, Kulnine, Krina, Heather Bell and Rangipuhi all looked in splendid fettle, the last named particularly showing a well trained and muscular appearance. By many he was thought hardly class enough for the company he was in, but the Wanganui con-

tingent supported him heavily, and the results warranted their confidence, for as soon as it came to racing in the last quarter of a mile he fairly smothered his field, and won in the easiest manner possible. It is somewhat curious, that Rangipuhi this year, and Kupenga, who won the Thompson Handicap last year, both came on to Wellington after winning the Feilding Handicap. The Workman and Kulnine ran prominently for six furlongs, but then died away, and Kulnine showed the same lack of staying power in the Autumn Handicap next day. Thame ran well throughout, but Rangipuhi was too fast for her at the finish. Krina, after getting well away and running well forward for half a mile, suddenly disappeared from the front and finished last. It afterwards transpired that something galloped on to her, and she was so lame next morning that she had to be scratched for the Autumn Handicap. Kingan rode Rangipuhi very well in the race. The horse got away absolutely last, but the jockey, instead of rushing him, waited patiently until half a mile had been travelled, when he brought him through in gallant style and had everything settled at the turn into the straight. The time, 1min 46 1-5sec, was very slow, and the ground must have been more holding than was supposed for such horses as The Workman, Thame, Kulnine, Krina and Heather Bell to be beaten by it, as under favourable circumstances every one of them is capable of cutting out a mile in 1min 40secs. Before the race Heather Bell created some sensation by throwing Connop and bolting. Fortunately the lad was not hurt and the mare was soon caught. The jubilant backers of Rangipuhi, after their favourite's victory, had a few minutes of anxious suspense, for a protest was entered by the rider of Thame that the winner crossed her in the straight. The stewards at once heard evidence on the subject, and unanimously decided that there was no reason to interfere with the judge's verdict.

A dozen runners came out for the Hack Handicap, and Mr E. Halward's three-year-old chestnut colt Kent, by St. George—Red Rose, who was weighted at 7.9 and ridden by Lindsay, was made favourite. Mr Page's Jack (8.7, carried 8.10), an aged gelding by Foul Play, who won two races at Feilding the other day; Brookfield, 8.10, the erstwhile crack Wairarapa hack, upon whom Derrett had the mount; Sea Serpent, a speedy three-year-old son of Piscatorious and Rumour, and Bonovoree, an equally speedy son of The Mute and Maid of all Work, were also well backed. The last-named was beautifully ridden by McKeague, and won cleverly after a good finish with Sea Serpent. Kent looked dangerous at the home turn, but failed to get a place. The Stewards' Handicap, proved the "moral" it looked for the Thompson Handicap winner, who was weighted at only 7.5, including a 5lb penalty. He won easily from Musket, 7.0, who was the only other one backed, and paid the very small dividend of £1 8s. In the Juvenile Handicap the four competitors were all well backed. Mr E. Cutts' beautifully bred colt Lakeshell, by Lochiel—Nautilus, was considered well handicapped at 7.12, and was made favourite. The top weight, Westmere, 9.5, ridden by McKeague, was second in demand, Captain Russell's Noyade, 8.11, next; while the Wairarapa two-year-old, Porepo, 7.0, by Remington—Mascotte, was the outsider of the party. As it turned out he was the only one who had any show with the top weight. Both Lakeshell and Noyade ran badly, and Porepo led for the first five furlongs, when Westmere was brought up and won easily. The Railway Handicap collapsed badly, for no fewer than six out of the nine coloured on the card were scratched, and only Prioress, 7.9, and Le Grand, 6.7, were sent out to oppose Whakawatea, who with 8.11, was fairly thrown in. Of course Whakawatea carried the bulk of the investments, and he justified the confidence reposed in him by winning easily from Le Grand who, considering that he has only just been promoted from the hack class, ran a very good race.

The second day's sport was, as I have said, marred by the failure of the horses to accept in the Derby and Heretaunga Handicap. For the former, which was the first race of the day, Stepniak, 9.7, upon whom Derrett had the mount, was made a hot favourite, but some very good judges planked their money on Whakawatea, who was in receipt of 12lbs from Mr Stead's "crack," Monte Carlo, 6.10, the other starter, had only a few supporters. The race is easily described, as Whakawatea waited on Stepniak for nearly a mile, and then, after a brief