

Sporting Topics.

(By "The Judge.")

The handicaps for the C.J.C. Grand National Hurdle Race, Steeplechase and Winter Cup are due on July 25.

It is said that Messrs Marshall and Whitaker will represent the Auckland Racing Club at the Racing Conference.

The Canterbury Jockey Club received 43 nominations for the G.N. Hurdle Race and 29 for the Steeplechase.

Roseshoot is reported to be in rather a bad way, as on his return home after the A.R.C. Meeting his leg swelled very badly and a period of idleness will be necessary.

The General and Tom are somewhat fancied in Auckland for the V.R.C. Grand National Hurdle Race, run on Saturday next.

Up-to-Date's name is missing from the list of nominations for the New Zealand Grand National Hurdle Race, for which it was thought he would have been a sure starter.

The sum of £11,174 was put through the totalisator at the recent meeting of the Hawke's Bay Jockey Club, which is £3102 more than was handled at the corresponding meeting last year.

On Tuesday Auckland punters almost fell over the top of one another to get on to Hippowai in the Hurdle Race, at Napier Park, but he finished outside of a place.

Betting during the week has been rather quiet. Double books have been opened on the Wellington Steeplechase and Hurdle Race. 100 to 2 is offered on the field, so that both races bear an open appearance.

For the Christchurch Grand National Slow Tom is still at the top of the market quotations. Although Roseshoot is still virtually an inmate of the hospital, he is the most fancied candidate for the Grand National Hurdle Race.

After losing his slander action, R. Sievier gave up his training stables near Salisbury, and they were taken over by the ex-New Zealander, J. Hickey, who trained the Grand National winner Moiffa for Mr S. H. Gollan.

Joe Chamberlain, who paid a dividend of £11 13s in the Corinthian Stakes, at the Hawke's Bay Meeting, is said to be a horse who will be likely to earn more winning brackets later on, for the son of Bonnie Scotland and Lady Dean fills the eye very pleasingly.

The best treated horses in the Wellington Steeplechase appear to be Haydn, Slow Tom, Moccasin, Papatu, Victory, Eclair and Crespin. Mr Chadwick's handicap is a distinctly good one, and the winner will take some finding.

The well-known Union liner Monowai ran into very heavy weather on her recent passage across the Tasman Sea, and the live stock she carried had a very bad time of it. A private cable states that seven horses were lost, the best known of which was the black horse Nihilist (Stepniak-Sincerity), who was a fair performer in the South.

Creusot is evidently improving as a hurdler. He won at Hawke's Bay and again at Napier Park, the races being carried off in such a convincing manner as to stamp the son of Torpedo and AEgyptilla as being clearly above the average. It looks as though Mr Lowry's gelding was hardly himself at the recent A.R.C. Meeting.

The V.R.C. Grand National Hurdle Race will be run on Saturday. This old-time event used to be the medium of considerable speculation at one time in Auckland, but since the advent of the s.p. system the public take but little interest in the big cross country event of the year in Victoria.

This week the connections of the pony Fashionable were approached and asked to put a price on the mare. The owners, however, did not care to part with the daughter of Soult and Bit of Fashion, as they had already refused £150 some time ago.

Mr J. Hooper, Auckland's amateur champion billiard player, has excelled all his previous efforts with the cue. He recently put up 186, and after losing the white at 120 made the last 66 off the red ball. It is doubtful if this break has been beaten by any amateur in the colony.

Acceptances for the first day of the Wellington Meeting close next Wednesday.

The Wellington Winter Meeting takes place on July 13 and 14.

Gisborne R.C. acceptances close tomorrow.

The fifty-four horses nominated for the C.J.C. Winter Cup constitutes a record entry for that event.

Ostiak seems to be taking very kindly to hurdle racing. The Stepniak gelding's victory in the Moteo Hack Hurdles, at Napier Park on Tuesday, was a very hollow affair.

Papatu accounted for the Napier Steeplechase in the easiest possible manner. Stockman was the only other horse to finish, Victory, Evening, and Towhatu all coming to grief.

Shellback dropped dead in his box at Riccarton on Thursday last, after doing a six furlongs gallop. The son of Nelson had proved himself a consistent failure on the race track.

Roseal, who was so stoutly backed for the last New Zealand Cup, is said to be going on very nicely with his preparation for this year's big event. He is being trained on the West Coast.

At least one of the notices of amendment to the Rules of Racing, which will be brought forward at the Racing Conference, applies to a rule already amended.

The case against twenty-five bookmakers in Auckland for loitering on the footpaths has been taken to the Supreme Court to test the validity of the new by-law on the subject. The result will be awaited with much interest by the metalicians concerned.

Nor-West, who won the Wellington Steeplechase last year with 11st in the saddle, also won it in 1898 with 9lb less in the saddle. Gobo is the only other horse which has twice proved successful in the race.

The biggest weight ever carried to victory in the Wellington Steeplechase was 12st, which was Plain Bill's portion when he came home in front in 1900. The old fellow has a stone less this year, but he is generally considered to be too infirm to have any hope of success.

The Gisborne Racing Club's Steeplechase Meeting will take place on July 7 and 8. Some horses of good class are entered, and if favoured with fine weather it looks as though the fixture should prove a very successful one.

Owners will do well to bear in mind that first forfeits for the 31st Great Northern Derby, Great Northern Foal Stakes and Tenth Royal Stakes, to be run at the Summer Meeting of the Auckland Racing Club, 1904-5, must be declared to Mr Percival to-morrow before 9 p.m.

Sly Miss, who was sold at the Messrs Friedlander Bros.' sale, at the Harp of Erin for eleven guineas, was purchased by Mr Brown, of the Northern Wairoa, who purposes putting the daughter of Flintlock and Miss Sly to Regal.

Next to the three great classic races, the Ascot Gold Cup is one of the most important races in connection with the English turf. Instituted nearly a century ago, it has since afforded a severe test of speed and endurance for the thoroughbred, and a glance down the winning scroll shows a long list of horses that have earned unqualified distinction on the racecourse and at the stud. Among those equine celebrities may be mentioned Glencoe, sire of the great stud matron Pocahontas—the dam of Stockwell—Touchstone, Grey Momus, Lanercost, Beeswing, The Emperor, Van Tromp, The Flying Dutchman, West Australian, Winkfield, Fisherman—whose importation has been of great and lasting benefit to the bloodstock of Australasia—Thormanby, Gladiateur (sire of Grandmaster), Lecturer, Blue Gown, Cromorne, Doncaster, Isonomy, Robert the Devil, St. Simon, St. Gatien, La Fleche, Persimmon, Cyl-lene, Merman (son of the unbeaten Australian horse Grand Flaneur), and William the Third. Last year the coveted prize was taken across the English Channel by the French horse Maximum II., who carried the colours of that enthusiastic Gallic sportsman M. C. E. Bremond, whose livery is almost as familiar in the big races at Newmarket, Epsom, and Ascot as on his native soil. For a while during the reign of William IV. the contestants for the Ascot Cup were restricted to horses belonging to members of the Jockey Club, Brooks's, and White's, but that restriction was soon afterwards removed, and since then the event has been open to all comers.

A Calcutta paper says that at the Rangoon meeting ten bookmakers refused to pay the increased license fee of 300rs. a day. The stewards declined to make any reduction, so the "books" got over the difficulty by arranging among themselves that three of their number should take out licenses, and the other seven should have an interest. The loss to the club at the old rate was 1600rs. a day.

After giving the "walk-up" start a fair trial, the "standing start" has been reverted to at the New York tracks. The "walk-up" system worked all right at the commencement, but as was only to be expected, the boys could not refrain from making a dash for a flying go, and towards the end they appear to have got completely out of control. When Starter Cassidy first came on the scene with his new method, the New York papers were loud in his praise, but now they have come to the conclusion that their laudation was somewhat premature.

On May 12 King Edward had the pleasure of seeing his colours carried to victory for the first time this season, when Rosemarket won the Breeders' Stakes. The colt, who is by Orion out of Rose Madder, bred by the King, previously ran fifth to Cicero for the Fitzwilliam Stakes at the Craven meeting, and, although two others were more fancied on this occasion, there was a good deal of enthusiasm when H. Jones landed Rosemarket a clever winner by a length from Mr L. de Rothschild's Khammurabi, after making the whole of the running.

Mr Bass, the owner of Sceptre, seems to have experienced a piece of bad luck in that the "warning off" of Mr R. Sievier would appear to disqualify the mare for the Princess of Wales' Stakes, of 10,000 sovs, at the Newmarket First July Meeting. According to Rule 67 (a) of the Rules of Racing, "A horse is disqualified by the disqualification of his present owner, or that of his owner at the time of entry or subscription, or that of any person who has any interest in such horse's winnings." Sceptre was nominated for the Princess of Wales' Stakes by her former owner, and he has an interest in her winnings in the race to the extent of 400 sovs, that being the amount which, according to the conditions, is to go to the nominator of the winner. The circumstances are so peculiar, though, that the Jockey Club may see fit to suspend the rule in this particular case.

An extraordinary incident (says an English paper) occurred during the races at Gatwick, when Happy Bird was found fast asleep at the end of his run for a two miles hurdle race. Efforts were made to rouse him, and he opened his eyes for a second or two, but promptly relapsed into slumber.

Writing of the wild horses in Kansas some thirty years ago, a traveller says that among the droves of these were mixed many American horses, and splendid mules which had escaped from camps and caravans. For months the tame horses and mules which thus break away from their owners keep by themselves, half to a quarter of a mile apart from the wild herd, which they eventually join. Once they do throw in their lot with the wild horses, the master stallions of the herd keep them jealously from returning to civilisation. Old trappers had a theory that these deserters could never be reclaimed by man once they had grown accustomed to liberty; but this idea is disproved by the fact that when a "drive" is undertaken, and a mixed mob of wild horses and deserters captured, all are equally capable of being tamed and broken.

The Government horse-breeding studs in France were first established as far back as 1666. They were discontinued during the French Revolution, but Napoleon, fully alive to the necessity of having supplies of horses for his cavalry and artillery, re-established them in 1806, and their existence has continued uninterrupted ever since, with, however, frequent changes to secure a greater efficiency. The last radical re-organisation took place in 1874, when it was decreed by Government that during the first fortnight of January in each year, a commission of officers, appointed by the general commanding each division throughout France, should visit every commune, and, in the presence of the Mayor, examine and classify every horse and mule of the age of six years old and upwards. A list of horses so examined, with the names and addresses of the owners, is sent to the recruiting officer of each district. Owners of horses who fail to bring them for examination on the day appointed are liable to a fine ranging from £2 to £40. The horses are classified according to height in six lists; and thus the French military authorities know not only how many horses there are in the country, but how many are suitable for heavy, medium and light cavalry, for artillery, saddle and draught, and for baggage waggons.

Gladsome has been handicapped at 9st 1lb in the Caulfield Cup, which is 6lb over weight-for-age.

Sir George Clifford's horses, Clan-ranal and Treadmill, are to serve a few approved mares. The fee for each is 20gs.

The Chicago Derby, valued at 15,000 dol., was run at Hawthorne, Chicago, on May 21, and was won by English Lad, the 6 to 5 favourite. The winner is by Requitul out of English Lady.

Of the four New Zealanders in the Metropolitan, to be run at Riccarton in September, Wairiki has been allotted 9st 6lb, Gladsome 9st 1lb, Martian 8st 4lb, and Grand Rapids 7st 11lb. Mr Stead's pair are the best treated.

Nominations close to-day with Mr Whyte, secretary of the Wellington Racing Club, for the following races:—Wellesley Stakes, 1905; Wellington Stakes, 1905; North Island Challenge Stakes, 1906; and New Zealand St-Leger, 1907.

Grand Rapids has always been over-estimated by handicappers in this colony. In the A.J.C. Epsom Handicap he has been given 8st 1lb, and in the Metropolitan 7st 11lb. He should have a fair outside chance in the latter race if stripped in his best.

Canteen has been allotted 8st in the Melbourne Cup, which is 2lb more than he carried to victory in the New Zealand Cup last year. I suppose on that form the grey might have an outside chance in the big race at Flemington, but it is evident that the Victorian handicappers have taken no notice of the numerous defeats registered against Mr Moss' horse since. He is too uncertain a customer to be relied on, and I should greatly doubt whether he will be sent across the water. In the Caulfield Cup Canteen has been given 7st 13lb.

As was generally anticipated, Abundance occupies pride of place in all the Australian Spring Handicaps. In the Epsom he has 9st 10lb, in the Metropolitan 9st 7lb, in the Caulfield and Melbourne Cups 9st 8lb. The son of Pilgrim's Progress and Beaufeast has proved himself a very sterling horse, but I greatly doubt his ability to win any of the big handicaps under such heavy imposts.

The greyhound Great Heart, who won the New South Wales Challenge Stakes last week, is without doubt the finest dog ever slipped in Australasia. He has now to his credit such events as a N.S.W. Derby, Central New England Champion Cup, Illawarra Challenge Stakes, two Orange Cups (1902 and 1903), second place in last year's Australian Waterloo Cup, and two N.S.W. Grand Challenge Stakes—one of 128 dogs (in 1902), and one of 108 dogs (in 1904). Great Heart is a red dog by Lindsay Gordon from Gipsy Queen, and in sixty-five courses has only had the flag raised against him on two occasions, a remarkable record indeed.

Moiffaad's half-brother Rhyll is keeping up the family reputation for jumping. The big son of Somnus and Denbigh carried 12st 13lb to victory on Tuesday in the Hack and Hunters' Steeplechase, at Napier Park, this making his second victory during the week. As the bay won in a canter by ten lengths in his latest effort, it would seem that Mr Pilcher should have good reasons for expecting that other races should also fall to the gelding.

It seems evident that either Australian handicappers have a very exalted opinion of New Zealand horses, or else the presence of representatives from this Colony are not desired in Australia. Another instance of this is given in the handicapping of Wairiki for the Melbourne Cup. The big son of Soult has been dealt out the crusher of 9st 6lb, which is 4lb more than he was beaten with in the last New Zealand Cup. On the running in that race the handicap is sufficiently ridiculous in that Canteen, who won, is raised 2lb, while Wairiki, who ran second, is raised 4lb. Certainly, Mr Bradley's horse subsequently won the Auckland Cup with 9st 8lb, but the only horse with any pretensions to weight-for-age form in that race was Treadmill, who was far from fit. In the Auckland Plate, Wairiki was defeated with 8lb less in the saddle, a fact which the Victorian handicapper has quite overlooked. To assess Wairiki so highly in a list of some one hundred and fifty representative horses of the Commonwealth is to offer no inducement to Mr Bradley to send the horse out, and it will not be a surprise to find that the scratching pen has been put through his name.