

Great Northern Steeplechase meeting now only some five weeks ahead. This very popular fixture will take place on May 30, June 3 and 6 a programme of seven events being run through on each day. On the first, items are the Maiden Steeplechase, of 150sovs, 2½ miles; the Jervois Handicap, of 100sovs, 5 furlongs; the Maiden Hurdles, of 110sovs, 1½ miles; the Great Northern Hurdles, of 650sovs, 2½ miles; the Cornwall Handicap, of 325sovs, 1½ miles; the Ladies' Bracelet, of 100sovs, 1½ miles; and the Members' Handicap, of 150sovs, 5 furlongs. On the second day (the Prince of Wales' Birthday) there will be the Orakei Hurdles, of 110sovs, 1½ miles; the Ranfurly Welter, of 100sovs, 1 mile; the Great Northern Steeplechase, of 850sovs, 3½ miles; the Remuera Hurdles, of 200sovs, 2 miles; the Prince of Wales' Handicap, of 325sovs, 7 furlongs; the Tally-ho Steeplechase, of 150sovs, 3 miles; and the Jumpers' Flat Race, of 150sovs, 1½ miles.

The bill of fare for the concluding day embraces the Ladies' Bracelet, of 50sovs (gentlemen riders) - mile; the Tamaki Steeplechase, of 110sovs, 2½ miles; the York Welter, of 325sovs, 1 mile; the Winter Steeplechase, of 300sovs, 3 miles; the Campbell Hurdles, of 200sovs, 2 miles; the Fitzroy Welter, of 100sovs, 6 furlongs; and the Farewell Handicap, of 150sovs, 5 furlongs.

Owners and trainers should note that nominations for the Great Northern Hurdles, Great Northern Steeplechase and Winter Steeplechase must be made to the secretary, J. F. Hartland, by 9 p.m. to-morrow (Friday) evening. Acceptances for those races, as well as general entries, close on May 8.

THE WANGANUI JOCKEY CLUB'S WINTER MEETING.

A very important fixture, which owners must not overlook, is the winter gathering of the Wanganui Jockey Club, which is fixed to take place on May 23 and 25. This is one of the most popular gatherings of the year and always keenly interests Auckland sportsmen, coming, as it does, immediately before the Great Northern meeting. Entries for all events close with Mr William Hall, the secretary, to-morrow (Friday) evening at 9 p.m. The events to be dealt with and money required are as follows:—Borough Handicap, 1 sov; Wanganui Steeplechase, 1 sov; Electric Hack Handicap, 1 sov; May Hurdles, 1 sov; Conolly Handicap, 1 sov; Purua Hack Flat Handicap, 1 sov; Winter Oats, 1 sov; Grandstand Steeplechase, 1 sov; Balgownie Hack Flat, 1 sov; Century Hurdles Handicap, 1 sov; Rata Hack Hurdles, 1 sov; Final Steeplechase Handicap, 1 sov; Final Steeplechase Handicap, 1 sov; Farewell Hack Flat Handicap, 1 sov. The full programme will be found in another column.

PONY RACING CONDEMNED.

"Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him." Pony racing has been getting it hot all round. Here are some remarks from the Christchurch "Press" on the subject:—A development which the anti-gambling supporters of the Gaming Act must view with alarm is the direct encouragement it has given to a form of "sport" which, it is not too much to say, stinks in the nostrils of all good sportsmen. It is possible, of course, to carry on pony racing by a proprietary club, in honest, cleanly fashion, but the undoubted fact remains that only rarely is it so conducted. The circumstances surrounding it invite suspicion and distrust. The proprietary pony-racing club is a law unto itself, and all connected with it are outlaws in the eyes of the sporting world. Sentence of disqualification is passed upon them by the rulers of racing and trotting; they are debarred from entering any registered racecourse in New Zealand. The profits of a registered racing club go towards increasing the stakes, improving the course and buildings, and catering in various ways for the comfort and convenience of its patrons—the public. The profits of a proprietary club go into the pockets of its members. A registered racing club has a reputation for clean sport to maintain. Jockeys and trainers and owners who might wish to indulge in "crooked" practices know that discovery would be followed by disqualification throughout New Zealand, and that knowledge undoubtedly discourages those who are only to be kept "straight" by fear of the consequences of wrong-doing. There is no such deterrent in the case of a proprietary club. Disqualified jockeys can find mounts at its meetings, and "spielers," who would be warned off the course of any registered club find the gates of the proprietary racecourse wide open to them. There is no central controlling authority in pony-racing as is the case with horse-racing and trotting, and thus, if any

proprietary club did happen to disqualify an offender, such disqualification would only apply as regarded that particular club; he would be free to carry on his roguery at any other pony race meeting he chose to patronise. There can be no arguing that pony racing as generally carried on by proprietary clubs encourages good sport; it exists simply for the encouragement of gambling, and is made possible for this purpose in New Zealand solely by the Gaming Act of last year, which, while permitting bookmakers to ply their calling at meetings to which totalisator permits were granted, placed absolutely no restriction on their frequenting any unlicensed race meeting that was held.

ELEVATION'S HEIGHT.

The New Zealand horse Elevation has been astonishing the track watchers, and though there is no argument as to his speed, there is any amount of discussion as to his height (says the "Town and Country Journal.") When he first appeared, his height was given in the Press as 15 hands, but some of the converted pony trainers, who are now training horses at Randwick, and who through long practice are first-class judges of height, were unanimous in voting him 15.1 at least. Now it seems that the trainer of the colt is willing to bet that he is over that height. This is big enough for anything, as it is 2in higher than Antonious, who was far from being a bad one. In the matter of height thoroughbred horses are very deceptive, as they are also in the rib and arm measurement. Like gamecocks, they are much bigger than they look. Poseidon himself, though apparently a small horse, is well over 15h 2in. Elevation, though not a big one, is very solid, and shows a lot of the well furnished frame and fully developed muscles characteristic of New Zealand stock. Any trainer who is used to it can pick out a New Zealand horse at sight, though they do occasionally send us a ragged one such as Isolt, who never carried any flesh at all.

LUCK IN BREEDING.

Angelica, though sister of St. Simon and dam of Orme, found no favour with the Duke of Westminster, and all her daughters (writes the Special Commissioner of the "Sportsman"), were disposed of. I was in at the buying of three of them myself, and a fourth went to France. So, too, with Ornament (dam of Sceptre), the late Duke would have none of her stock, though she is own sister to Ormonde. This can only have been due to caprice, for not only is Ornament own sister to Ormonde, made "taboo," but all her stock was sold without any exception, coming under the hammer or being privately sold, from Star Ruby down to Sceptre. Would the late Duke of Westminster have retained Sceptre had he lived? I do not think he would have done so, for he cheerfully got rid of such horses as Star Ruby, Labrador, and Collar, all out of the same mare. Indeed, to my mind, there was never a breeder who enjoyed better luck than the late Duke of Westminster. He was lucky in his initial purchase of Doncaster, but he did his best to offend fortune when he sold the sire of Bend Or for the beggarly sum of 6,000 guineas to go to Hungary, just because he did not at once follow on with another Bend Or. Then there was the good luck over the mix up between Bend Or and Tadcaster, and, as regards this, the late Mr. James Lowther, who was one of the stewards called upon to decide that objection, told me some few years before he died that while they had, of course, done their best to arrive at a correct decision, he had come to the conclusion from what he subsequently came to learn, that they were wrong. On that I have always been inclined to the same belief, for there was no more impartial, clear-headed man than Mr. Lowther, and Bend Or, as a horse, bore a very striking resemblance to Sandiway, who was probably his sister. No one need worry about the matter now, for Bend Or was certainly better bred, if he was out of Clemence, than if he was out of Rouge Rose, and the matter can never go beyond academic discussion. Likenesses may be attributed to the common blood of Doncaster in either case, and thus we may argue in a circle for all time without making any advance. Here, then, was another instance of the Duke of Westminster's luck. If Mr. Lowther had known earlier what he came to know later, it is in the highest degree possible that Bend Or would have been disqualified for the Derby, and the Duke would have likely enough cut racing from that time forward. As it was, he won

the Derby and carried on with great results, while if Bend Or was really out of Clemence, that made him all the better as a stallion, and probably contributed to the merits of Ormonde. Perhaps the crowning instance of the Duke of Westminster's luck was the breeding of Flying Fox from Vampire. He bought the mare privately, and on finding that she was of very vicious temper, did all he could to make the seller take her back. Then, when she was mated with Orme, it was no case of judicious selection of a sire, but the mare was so queer in her temper that it was thought unsafe to send her away from home. On one occasion, when she came open-mouthed at his Grace, who had gone into her box to look at her, he was so annoyed that he ordered her to be destroyed, but the stars in their courses were on his side. Needless to say, no one dreamed of executing the sentence on Vampire, and the momentary anger was soon forgotten. Vampire produced Flying Fox, and for that alone ranks among the immortals, but there have been other good ones out of her, and some people still believe in her son, Vamose, for the classics of this year.

NOTES.

(By The Judge.)

Had Woodhey been on the inside, the Birkenhead filly would have beaten Delegate in the Tradesman's Handicap. The latter bored out all the way from the distance, carrying the filly with him. Lord Seaton finishing on the rails would have beaten them both with a little further to go.

Ranana is so hollow-backed a gelding as to necessitate a cushion under the saddle. The Australian's son galloped and jumped well in the Brighton Hurdles, nothing else having a chance with him at the finish, although Dolores chased him home.

For such a good prize as the Champagne Stakes it must have been a little disappointing to the executive to find such a poor field competing. Of the six runners at least three could be safely reckoned on to finish among the "also started" and the result took no brain fig to foretell or even to place them.

Veronica finished at a great pace in the Easter Handicap and had she got away better she might have won. The Sout mare was a long way back as they entered the straight, but she fairly smothered everything but Gold Crest for speed in the closing stages.

'Aborigine was a "hot pot" for the Northern Champagne Stakes, and as a matter of fact he won fairly easily. The son of Merriwee and Indian Queen got well away and held his own all the way up the straight, winning without the whip. The best of the local squad was Master Sout. He finished gamely enough, but in Mr Watt's gelding, evidently met his master, from which it may be inferred that, although a very fair colt, he is evidently no champion.

There is no getting away from the fact that Gold Crest's victory in the Easter Handicap was an exceptionally meritorious one. Nine stone was a big impost for a three-year-old, yet the chestnut son of Gold Reef very easily carried it to victory. When one considers that the course was a trifle on the heavy side and that the mile was cut out in 1min 40sec—a record for the race—the value of Gold Crest's gallant deed can be the better appreciated. Rarely has the cheer at the finish been better deserved.

It seems probable that any chance Soutline might have had in the Easter Handicap was thrown away by the rider. On a doubtful stayer, but very fast horse like the bay gelding, it seemed suicidal policy to race the gelding at his very top with the hope of breaking up the field. Naturally he was the first to cry peccavi.

Judged on the betting one might have thought the Oaks was all over before the race commenced, so hotly did punters rush Woodhey. There is no such a thing as a certainty in racing, however, and after Woodhey had attempted to break up the field, Ryan brought up Maheno and the Sout filly won by two lengths. As a race, the Oaks was something of a failure as at the finish competitors were scattered all down the course.

The St. George's Handicap on Monday was robbed of much interest owing to the withdrawal of Gold Crest. His absence was, of course, only to be expected,

as the handicapper had dealt it out to the son of Gold Reef. A weight of 9st 10lb for a three-year-old in heavy going was rather too much to ask any colt to carry and as might have been anticipated, the scratching pen was used on his name.

Scotty had a very easy win in the Steward's Handicap. He was always in a good position and when Ryan gave him his head the old St. Leger gelding fairly romped in. After his poor showing on the opening day, Scotty's easy victory was the cause of some adverse remarks, but as a matter of fact he had been easily treated by the handicapper.

A very hot pot was bowled over in Soutline in the Huia Handicap on Monday. In the Easter Handicap he was reported to have cut out the first six furlongs in 1min 12sec, but the increased weight and the heavy going seemed to anchor him on Monday, and two moderates, in Golden Eagle and Lady Rohina, beat him pointlessly. It was a nasty facer for the public who couldn't see how the son of Sout was to be beaten.

What a splendid finish was provided in the Eilers'ie Handicap. Diamond Star, Rarata, Master Sout, and Diabolo finished almost in a line. Mr Lusk's verdict being "short heads between the four." Master Sout made a very bold bid inside the distance, but the weight stopped him in the last little bit. Had he been better placed in the earlier stages, the Porirua candidate Diabolo, who was favourite, might have just about pulled off the race.

Mahuta fairly broke up the field in the Autumn Handicap. He rushed away with the lead and at one time was over six lengths ahead of his nearest rival. Scotty chased him home, but the gap was too big and the southerner got home over a length to the good.

Frank Burns, who so nearly got Irish home in the Autumn Steeplechase, was on Ingorangi when he won the race in 1891, and also rode Car-buncle to victory in 1896.

Mark Ryan was the most successful horseman at the Easter meeting, as he piloted three winners, Brady, Wilson and Julian riding two each.

Buccluch pulled up lame after winning the C.J.C. Easter Handicap.

The "tote" figures at the C.J.C. meeting showed a tremendous falling off, this amounting to no less than £9543 as compared with last year.

There is evidently plenty of money about Feilding. During the two days of the Easter meeting the sum of £31,533 went through the totalisator, which knocks the Christchurch figures "into a cocked hat."

Elevation's break-down in Sydney is reported to be a bad one, a tendon having been said to have gone.

"Fair Play" writes me a letter which, owing to the writer not having enclosed his name, cannot be published. He strongly condemns the fact of Deeley being disqualified by the A.R.C. without being heard in his own defence.

The longest flat race in the colonies, the A.J.C. Plate, run over three miles, will be decided at Randwick on Saturday. Tartan (9.5), Dyed Garments (9.2), Poseidon (9.0), Mountain King (8.0), Peru (8.0), and Maranui (8.0) are among the entries.

The Sydney Cup, run on Monday, fell to Mr. Connolly's horse Dyed Garments, who fairly ran away with the race, beating Tartan by six lengths, Absentee being two lengths away third. The winner is by Malvolio from Bozra, and readers of the Bible will thus immediately see the reason of the peculiar name. This is one more cup for Mr. Connolly, whose luck in this respect is somewhat remarkable.

White Lie, who won the Easter Handicap at the Wairarapa Meeting, is a black mare by Merriwee from Fib, by Korari from Fable by Slanderer. Her solitary victory last year was when she beat Truthful, Devonia, and five others in the Tawaha Hack Race at the Wairarapa Summer Meeting.

The committee of the Australian Jockey Club have increased the value of the A.J.C. Derby to 3,000 guineas, making it the richest classic race in the Colonies. This is a counter-blast to the V.R.C., whose Derby was recently raised to 2,000 guineas. The A.J.C. have also raised the stakes for the Metropolitan Handicap and Sydney Cup to 2,500 guineas each, and the Spring Stakes to 1,000 guineas.