

has been straightened and a double line of rails laid the journey between Trentham and Wellington will not occupy much beyond 35 minutes. The needful improvements, it is expected, will be completed by the end of the year.

J. W. Lowe scored a couple of nice little wins at Napier Park meeting with Sir Frisco and Iranui. Lowe is a very painstaking man, and devotes his whole time to the horses placed in his charge, with the result that quite a number of small events has fallen to horses trained by him this season.

Aeolus, one of Lowe's team, has been engaged in the C.J.C. Grand National Hurdle Race. The son of Euroclydon made a meritorious beginning at the illegitimate game by winning on his very first attempt at the Wairarapa R.C. Easter Meeting. He subsequently raced at Wellington and Wanganui, but did not jump as cleverly as on his first attempt, and failed to add further to his fame, although he was close on the winner's heels in both of his Wanganui essays. There is every hope of Aeolus developing into a good hurdler when more matured at the game.

Ghoorka is another well performed flat racer that now figures amongst the list of horses engaged in hurdle events. The son of Lochiel was placed hors de combat through a kick which he received when last saddled up for a race. His owner subsequently sold him to Mr R. Weller, of Porirua, who used him for stud purposes during last season. Since then he has been hacked about and indulged in schooling work, and his owner has every hope of getting a hurdle race or two out of him.

Letherin is another well performed flat racer that gives every promise of becoming proficient over hurdles. This gelding made his first effort at the Hawke's Bay Winter Meeting, when he was observed to jump very well for a novice. His next attempt was at the Napier Park meeting, where he won carrying top weight, and on the following day put up a capital performance by running second with 11.10 in the saddle.

It is a noteworthy fact that riders whose duty it is to school horses for hurdle racing, declare that the thoroughbred horse is the one that becomes most quickly proficient at hurdle racing. They are both more courageous and clever than mongrel-bred animals, and many instances are quoted where thoroughbred horses have jumped like practised hurdlers on the very first attempt. Exmoor, Shrapnel, Paritutu, and Record Reign are instances.

Last year a number of horse owners took strong exception to the penalty conditions imposed by the C.J.C. on horses that might win a race prior to the Grand National Meeting. It was pointed out that a winner at Wellington would be penalised 14lbs in both the G.N. Steeple and Hurdle handicaps. This it was contended was unjust to owners who wished to race their horses at both meetings, as no horse other than a phenomenal lightweight could be expected to prevail with an additional 14lbs, and in the case of a heavily weighted horse winning at Trentham his chance at Riccarton would be extinguished. The V.R.C. Grand National conditions are fixed on a sliding scale, viz., winners of a hurdle race after declaration of weights if handicapped at 9st to 10st, 7lb extra; 10st 1lb to 11st 6lb, 5lb; 11st 7lb or upwards 3lb extra. The Steeplechase conditions read, "winner of any handicap Steeplechase after the declaration of weights value 100sovs, 7lb extra, of two or more such races, 10lb extra. Had the C.J.C. adopted similar conditions all owners could have raced their horses at both Trentham and Riccarton.

WANGANUI.

WANGANUI, July 1.

The Patea Racing Club intends to take steps to have its course put in first-class order for its next meeting. The Taranaki Metropolitan Club has intimated that unless some improve-

ment was made in the condition of the course the question of granting a permit for next meeting would have to be seriously considered.

Fretwork's dual win at the Napier Park Meeting was well received here, both on account of the owner and also the rider (W. Higgins). The son of The Workman—Variety was bred by Mr. G. M. Currie, who owns him. He was expected to run well forward in the big steeple here, but was brought down when Canton fell at the second fence, and thus lost any chance he may have had. He is likely to run well at Wellington, where another Wanganui candidate in Lull is also expected to show up well in the steeplechase.

The Manawatu Racing Club has appointed Messrs. R. S. Abraham, C. A. Loughman and H. Cooper a sub-committee to visit Wellington when the Racing Conference is sitting, with the view of placing their views fully before the Conference with regard to the club's affiliation for the Metropolitan Stakes. The general opinion here is that the club's request is not at all likely to be acceded to.

Immolation and Lingerer are both engaged at the Wellington meeting next month. The aged son of Apremont showed very promising ability just prior to the Wanganui meeting, but over-reached himself and sustained a severe fetlock wound prior to the racing here, and has been spelling in consequence until quite recently. Immolation is engaged in both flat and hurdle races, and is having the work slipped into him in view of the coming engagements.

I understand that Mr. Tom Quinlivan, sen., intends applying for a trainer's license again shortly, and it is quite on the cards that he will start operations here if successful in getting his license, of which he is very confident.

It is probable that Helen Portland will be raced again during the approaching season. The daughter of Dorchester has been fired, and is progressing well now. It is to be hoped that she will stand a preparation again, as she is very fast when really well.

Ma Mie Rosette, the dam of Signor, has produced a colt foal to Lupin, and Melinite a brown colt by San Fran. Both of these youngsters are racy-looking, and should win a race or two for their owner (Mr. G. F. Moore, of Bushy Park).

There is some talk of Armistice being mated with the imported horse Charlemagne II., a sire which the late Mr. G. G. Stead purchased at Home. Both Colleen and Polycaste are in foal to Sweet Simon, and Swift is in foal to Conqueror.

Maniapoto is shortly to be put into work again. The son of Souit has had a very long spell, and may possibly be got back to form again by the spring.

Prior to the Wanganui Steeplechase Meeting, the opinion was expressed in these columns that Fretwork was likely to make a name for himself over country very shortly, and he has done so, as is proved by his performance in winning the double at Napier Park. He fenced splendidly each day, and was admirably ridden by Mr. W. Higgins, whose many friends were delighted to hear of his success. Harry Alexander had the gelding in tip-top form, and he fully deserves the success he has scored since he has taken so much trouble with the horse.

Fretwork is bred to jump, being by The Workman out of Variety, whose pedigree fairly bristles with jumping blood, she being by Natator—a sire of many fine jumpers—from the Painter mare Last Chance. Moifaa and Gobo could both boast a combination of Natator—Painter blood, and Painter's progeny included Ahua, Chemist, Odd-fellow, Denbigh, Artist, and others.

Mr. G. M. Currie received a cheque for £295 as the result of Fretwork's double win at Napier Park.

Mahoe and Irish Rifle will both be taken to Trentham for the Wellington winter meeting. The former does

not figure in anything the first day, but Irish Rifle is in the Stewards' and Parliamentary Handicaps. Jimmy Peachey has the Musketry gelding in good nick.

A TOTALISATOR ADVOCATE.

Sir Walter Gilbey is in all respects an admirable example of what used to be called a "Merchant Prince." By his unflinching devotion to work and shrewd business capacity he has earned wealth and a baronetcy; indeed, he is a model to be pointed out to industrious youth as one whom they could not do better than sedulously imitate. I suppose (says an English writer) there is no Sunday school teacher, however strict his principles may theoretically be, who would not agree with this estimate of Sir Walter's character—and he thinks it a matter for much regret that the pari mutuel is not introduced into this country, and drawn upon to supply funds for the development of the horse-breeding industry. In 1907 the sum of £12,280,000 passed through the pari mutuel in France. Eight per cent. was deducted by the Government, with the result that, half having been allocated for working expenses, £245,600 went to various charities and hospitals, £122,800 to prizes for the breeders of winners, and a similar amount was at the disposal of the Minister of Agriculture.

Sir Walter is of opinion that if the pari mutuel were legalised in this country, "the percentage would certainly be not less than it is in France, and probably a very great deal more." That means that something like £300,000 would be provided for charities, hospitals, etc., and the same amount for the encouragement of horse-breeding. This is the rooted conviction of our model Merchant Prince, who declares that "it would be impossible to suggest a method of raising revenue in favour of which there is so much and against which there is so little to be said."

What is there to be said against it? The parrot cry that it would be "the legal recognition of gambling" is the only obstacle. We will not stop to argue over terms, as to whether backing a horse is "gambling." Many people do not so regard it; but what solid and tenable objection is there to the familiar suggestion which Sir Walter Gilbey once more puts forward?

I was discussing the subject a few days ago with one of our (possibly) heaven-directed rulers, a distinguished Radical. He shook his head when I talked to him about Sir Walter's letter, and declared that "it would never do!" "Putting politics aside," I inquired, "don't you think it would be an excellent thing?" "Of course I do!" he answered. "But you'd vote against it, I suppose, if it were brought forward?" I continued, and he replied that "Of course he should." "Perhaps you would speak against it, too?" I went on, and he said that he might very possibly do that. "But don't you think that even some of your straight-laced constituents would have the sense to see that the country is sacrificing a handsome revenue, which would be supplied willingly by people who could afford and would gladly furnish it for charities and other most desirable objects?" I proceeded to ask, and he entirely agreed. "It isn't what I think, my dear fellow," was his somewhat abstruse explanation of his attitude; "it's what other people think that they ought to think."

THE AMATEUR RIDER.

In a recent article on this subject the "Melbourne S. and D. News" says: Complaint is often heard about the scarcity of capable amateur riders, and yet is it any wonder that there are so few horsemen of this class worthy the name. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the amateur does not get nearly the number of opportunities to figure in the saddle that he is entitled to. It is true that during the winter months chances are held out to him, especially if he is "useful" at the cross-country game, but with the season over, he is rarely wanted again to figure in his own company until the winter comes round again. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that young fellows with a taste for the saddle soon find their enthusiasm on the wane. To be left comparatively idle for three parts of the year is scarcely the sort of thing to encourage and develop amateur talent.

If we want to bring out the material that must in a country like this always be ready for the "making," it will be necessary to promote races all

the year round for the purpose. It is not difficult to see that there would soon be no dearth of amateur riders of the first rank if the young men of the day with a liking for the business were given a little assistance by the different race clubs. Or, better still, the amateurs themselves might band together and form a strong club, and thus make their own opportunities, instead of depending on others to do it for them. It is scarcely likely that the Government, in the matter of licensing, would throw any opposition in the way of such an organisation. Let the amateurs race on the "picnic" principle, which has been found to answer so well all over New South Wales, and, properly conducted, this class of sport would be bound to flourish on this side quite as well as over the Murray. Here is a way out of the present difficulty for the amateurs, and they should take it, for, as they have learned from experience, it is useless to expect much from the regular clubs. We should say that if a good, strong, genuine, amateur club were formed in Melbourne, it would not take long to unearth a fair number of "gentlemen riders" capable of taking care of themselves in the field, either on the flat or over jumps. Something of the sort might not be a bad thing over on this side, where barring a few races by the A.R.C., the amateur gets no encouragement.



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