

events are very unsatisfactory, and plainly show that owners and trainers are growing chary of entering for jumping races in the summer. The Wellington Racing Club had no hurdle races on their Summer programme this year, and the support given to the substituted events was strong evidence that the move was a good one. Other clubs will doubtless follow their example, and it is almost certain that the result will be beneficial. We believe that if the Racing Conference barred jumping events from the end of October to the beginning of April, we should have better jumpers, many more of them, and far more interesting sport during the proper season of the year.

**THE QUESTION OF THE HOUR.**

There is no more absorbing topic of conversation just now than the Empire's war with the Boers. In every quarter of the globe wherever

the English language is spoken the most authentic details from the scene of operations are waited with a feverish anxiety. And nowhere is the desire for particulars so strong as in the Australasian colonies. The leading journals of these colonies have arranged with correspondents for letters from the seat of war, and their columns have been filled with copy, which though interesting enough from the narrow personal point of view, leaves the public unsatisfied. The wider view of affairs is what is required, and this week we are in the position of being able to put vividly before our readers the scene of the operations of General Lord Methuen's force, which has for its first objects the relief of Kimberley and Mr Cecil Rhodes. This letter, from Mr Frederic Villiers, will no doubt be received with very great satisfaction, for nothing so picturesque, so graphic, or so accurately descriptive has yet appeared in the columns of the colonial Press. As the weeks pass by we shall chronicle the history of the advance of Lord Methuen's column. We know from the latest cablegrams that Lord Methuen will be shortly reinforced by a large body of troops, and that consequently the Kimberley force will have much to do in the future. Letters from the pen and sketches from the pencil of such an experienced correspondent and campaigner as Mr Frederic Villiers cannot fail to command attention. Therefore we claim to have conferred a distinction upon the colony in engaging the services of a war correspondent of such high renown.

**Sporting Topics.**

[BY PETRONEL.]

Yesterday (Wednesday) ponies entered for the approaching meeting of the Otahuhu Trotting Club were measured at Potter's Paddock.

J. O. Booth left for the West Coast on Sunday with St. Jack who has engagements at the Taranaki Jockey Club's Meeting.

To-morrow (Friday) the second forfeit of 2 sovs is due for the Auckland Racing Club's Champagne Stakes, to be run at the Autumn Meeting.

Aleger and Kissmary, the winners of the two-year-old races at the Takapuna Meeting, were bred by Mr Thomas Morrin at Wellington Park.

Knight of Athol, Minerva II., Cuirassette, Tim, Tolstoi, Firefly, Coronet, and Straybird figure among the nominations for the Wanganui Jockey Club's Autumn Meeting.

In the Hack Handicap on Wednesday Perseverance's number was put up as third place getter. In reality he was a couple of lengths or more behind the placed horses and finished fifth.

On Sunday J. B. Williamson departed for Taranaki with Coronet and Cuirassette to fulfil engagements at the New Plymouth, Egmont, and Wanganui Meetings. I should not be surprised if J.B. picks up a jumper during his travels.

The money speculated on the machine during the three days racing at Takapuna amounted to £26,169. This sum is £4169 in excess of the money speculated at the corresponding meeting last year. On each day of the meeting Mr Blomfield's staff got through their work in excellent style.

The Slave has quickly given Jack Thorpe a return for her purchase money. On Wednesday she started a hot order for the Pony Handicap, and proved the correctness of the public estimate by winning very easily. After her poor display on the first day one would hardly have expected her to meet with such a strong support. Anyhow, punters hit the mark on the second occasion with great precision, and the little mare proved herself a very smart bit of stuff.

Martin Taylor, who was present during the meeting of the Takapuna Jockey Club, has gone on a short visit to Te Aroha. Miss Taylor accompanies her father. The genial metalician will be on the scene at the meeting of the Te Aroha Jockey Club which takes place on Saturday and Monday next.

Waiorongomai was looked upon as the good thing of the day at Takapuna on Saturday, and punters accorded her very warm support for the Summer Handicap. However, the mare never showed prominently, and left her backers loudly lamenting. Perhaps she may run better at the Taranaki Meeting to-day.

On Friday Messrs John Churton and Co. will dispose of the privileges in connection with the Summer Meeting of the Otahuhu Trotting Club. The meetings of this suburban club are always popular, and the forthcoming gathering should be no less interesting. The various rights should therefore be eagerly competed for.

Dayntree sported silk on Saturday, and looked very well, despite the rumour that he had gone amiss. The handsome grey carried his 8st 10lb into third place in the Devonport Handicap. Mr J. Taylor's new registered colors are black jacket, pink sash, and yellow cap. This combination on the grey horse is very effective and easily distinguished.

It is very often a good thing to back a horse away from the course. A friend tells me that, travelling in the King Country last week, he desired to back Nor-West for the Steeplechase on Wednesday. He found a layer who disbelieved in the ability of the gallant Nor-West to carry 13st 5lb to victory, and quickly snapped up the odds offered—3 to 1.

Nor-West looked in great fettle when he paraded just before the Steeplechase on Wednesday, and in the race he proved himself a top sawyer at the jumping game. He took every fence beautifully, and of course had nothing to beat after Opu's fatal smash. Still it was a good performance to carry 13st 5lb to victory, and nothing too good can be said of the Sou'-Wester gelding.

Alec Phillips is to be sincerely condoled with over the Opu accident. The chestnut was a very useful animal, and though I do not believe he would have beaten Nor-West if he had stood up, he would have undoubtedly given the bay a good race. Both had improved considerably since their last encounter, and while Peter Chaaffe was extremely confident of success, Alec Phillips was just as sanguine about the prospects of the Emir Bey gelding.

Kissmary's victory in the Hobson Handicap on Wednesday was a very hollow win. Mr Caulton's strapping chestnut filly got the worst of the start, and ran at the tail end of the field for some distance. Once in the top stretch Satman let her go, and she passed the others as if they were standing still. In the straight she easily maintained her advantage, and finally won, pulling up, from St. Elyn and Lady Avon.

The Waihi Jockey Club holds its Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 3, on the new race-course at Waihi. The detailed programme appears elsewhere in this issue. There are eight races on the card with a total stake value of 125 sovs. The Waihi Cup, one mile and a quarter, is the principal event. This is worth 35 sovs, of which 5 sovs goes to the second horse. Mr D. McCurdy, the secretary of the club, will receive nominations on Thursday next, February 15, at Waihi. Mr W. Knight is handicapper to the club.

As will be seen from a perusal of our advertisement columns, the Paeroa Druids' Annual Race Meeting will be held on the Paeroa Race-course on Saturday, February 24. The stake-money for the seven races on the programme amounts to £62, the principal race being the Druids' Cup. This event is run over a mile and a half, and the stake is 20 sovs. Entries close with the secretary, Mr H. Poland, Paeroa, on Saturday next, February 10.

The winning sires at the Takapuna Summer Meeting were as follows:—Regel four wins by the aid of Favona and Tiki, Stepanik three with Tolstoi, St. Leger two with Aleger and St. One, Hotobkies two with Korowai and Kissmary, Cuirassier two with Doctor and Knight of Athol, Castor one with St. Elmo, Billingsgate one with Telephone, St. Clair one with Red Lancer, Sou'-Wester one with Nor'-West, Nelson one with Cadiz, Muskapeer one with Athel, Lionel one with Voltigeur II., Brigadier one with Brigham Young, Tasman one with Trooper, Metal one with Minerva II., and The Workman one with The Slave.

The winning jockeys at the Takapuna Meeting were as follows:—F. Burns four wins, three on Favona and one on Voltigeur II.; Tate three, two Tolstoi and one on Red Lancer; Buchanan two, on Brigham Young and Aleger; Duff two, on The Slave and St. Elmo; Satman two, on Kissmary and Tiki; Myers two, on Doctor and Trooper; J. Chaaffe, jun., one, on Cadiz; W. Stewart one, on St. Oua; R. Hall one, on Nor'-West; Whitehouse one, on Knight of Athol; J. Stewart one, on Korowai; Gillespie one, on Telephone; Abbott one, on Athel, and W. Clarke one, on Tolstoi.

Owners and trainers must bear in mind that to-morrow (Friday) is nomination day for the Auckland Racing Club's Easter Handicap, Autumn Handicap, and First Hurdle Handicap. The entry for each of these races is 1 sov. The Easter Handicap is run over one mile, and has stake-money to the amount of 500 sovs, of which the second horse receives 50 sovs, and the third 10 sovs. The Autumn Handicap distance is one mile and a half, the stake and place money being the same as in the Easter Handicap. Mr W. Percival, the secretary of the A.R.C., will receive nominations up till 9 p.m. to-morrow.

Seahorse and Merriwee are equal first favorites for the Australian Cup at 8 to 1.

The Queenscliffe Cup, run on Thursday, Jan. 23, was won by Avalon, a son of Strathmore.

The Victorian handicappers seem to be of the opinion that Hautboy is a few pounds superior to Finland and Kenley.

James Monaghan, the Randwick trainer, is to have the care of Seahorse while the Nelson colt is in Australia.

Messrs Barnett and Grant report the following business for the week on the Great Easter and Great Autumn Handicaps:—500 to 5 Benzoin and Fulmen, 100 to 3 Advance and Malatua.

Admiral Hawke and Knight of Athol ought to have something to do with the finish for the Te Aroha Jockey Club's Handicap on Saturday.

During the week P. Keith brought up the Taranaki hack Forty-fives, who has gone into the hands of Harry Francis.

The committee of the Auckland Racing Club on Monday decided to donate the sum of £5 5s to the fund being raised for erecting a memorial to the late Father Walter McDonald.

The Hawke's Bay Daily Telegraph, on the 1st instant, entered upon its thirtieth year of publication. The paper is now an eight-page journal.

The Wellington Racing Club stewards have decided not to interfere with their decision on the Wedlock case, as no fresh evidence was adduced when Free Holmes appeared before them on Monday last.

Nominations close to-day for the following races, to be run at the Autumn Meeting of the Hawke's Bay Jockey Club:—Hawke's Bay Cup, Autumn Handicap, Railway Stakes, and Burke Memorial Stakes. The entry fee for each of the above races is 1 sov.

Joe Gallagher returned from Wellington on Sunday with Rosella, Hastings, and Beddington. The two-year-old will now enjoy a well-earned spell. He is growing very fast, and has done plenty of hard work, so that a rest until the Autumn Meeting of the A.R.C. should prove very beneficial.

At the committee meeting of the Auckland Racing Club, on Monday, a letter from Messrs Weatherby (stake-holders, etc., to the English Jockey Club) relative to the Hobson Handicap incident. In effect the letter says that the Racing Conference was wrong in upsetting the decision of the A.R.C. It was decided to forward a copy of the letter to the chairman of the Racing Conference.

Jack Booth trains a very smart little pony in the three-year-old filly Athel, by Muskapeer out of Bay Bess. In the Pony Race on Saturday the filly was off like greased lightning when the barrier went up, and, never giving anything else in the race a chance, ran home an easy winner by some four lengths from Trooper. Athel cut out the five furlongs in 1min 4.2-5 sec—very smart time for a novice in the pony ranks.

After very many unsuccessful efforts, Red Lancer scored a very easy victory in the Summer Handicap at Takapuna on Saturday. On the strength of his excellent showing he was made a warm favorite for the Devonport Handicap, for he only had 7st 8lb (including a 5lb penalty). He was never prominent, and once again he left his backers lamenting.

St. Elmo, who had had a strong following in each of his previous efforts at the Takapuna Meeting, was not well fancied for the Devonport Handicap on Saturday. However, he made a one-horse race of it on this occasion, and paid over 8 to 1 on each machine. I am told his connections let him run practically for the stake alone. Certainly, there is a glorious uncertainty about the average racehorse.

Favona proved himself a good performer over the small sticks at the Takapuna Meeting. The big chestnut won the open Hurdle Race on each day, carrying respectively 9st 6lb, 10st 6lb, and 11st 2lb. On Saturday he ran the mile and three-quarters in three seconds less than the journey occupied on the previous Wednesday. Sy. Coombes came in for plenty of hearty congratulations upon the triple success of the Regel gelding.

Voltigeur II., after running a duffing race in the Hurdles on Saturday, came out and ran a good one in the Steeplechase, and handsomely beat the favorite (Crusado). Burns rode the grey, and though the horse tried to cut it at the water jump the second time round, his rider got him over some how. The last time at the water Voltigeur II. shaped a little better, and quickly got the better of Stockman. Crusado jumped slowly and never seemed able to go the pace. Maybe making the pace for Nor'-West on Wednesday took all the steel out of him, or perhaps his indifferent display was due to the fact that Peter Chaaffe had not plaited his tail.

In the advertisement columns Messrs A. Tooman and Co. announce an auction sale, on account of Mr S. Tooman, for Saturday, 24th. Mr S. Tooman has decided to retire from the racing game, and there is no disputing the fact that he has always owned a very valuable team. The horse Little Wonder is too well known to require comment, and the little mare Bavaria is the fastest of her size in the colony. Pipiwaharoa is also amongst the entrants, and he is well known for pace and staying qualities, in addition to being a stallion. Reporter, by Cannon, is included in the sale, and should command the attention of buyers of jumpers, for during his career few have been known to clear fences like him. A full sister to Favona, 3yrs, unbroken, is also to be offered; she is well and sound. Mr Arthur Tooman conducts the sale, and no doubt the stock will command a fair amount of competition. It is not every day we hear of such a valuable string of winners going under the hammer.

The Gairloch took down the following horses yesterday:—The Needle, Pohutukawa, Tolstoi, Firefly, and Minerva II. Jack Rae's stable ought to pick up a race or two before the trip to the West Coast is over.

The following programmes were passed by the A.R.C. on Monday:—Papakura Hack Racing Club, March 3; Lake Takapuna R.O., Waihi Racing Club, March 3; Avondale R.C. Autumn, May 2 and 3; Thames Valley J.C. Annual, April 16; and Whakatane R.C., March 17.

The Chief has been withdrawn from the New market Handicap and the Australian Cup. It was found that he would not stand the necessary preparation, and therefore he has been turned out for a lengthy rest.

Several prominent sporting men have signed a requisition to the Australian Jockey Club asking for a rehearing in the case of Frank Fielder, who was recently disqualified for a period of three years.

Dan McLeod's filly St. Elyn met with an accident the other day while exercising on the road at Ellerslie. She played up a bit, and in consequence received injuries which will keep her from work for some time.

The Te Aroha Jockey Club's meeting, which will be held on Saturday and Monday next, should attract a good attendance of Auckland sportsmen. The train service has been altered for their convenience, and there is a special boat service to Paeroa.

At the time of going to press the following results from Taranaki had reached us:—Stewards' Handicap—Gowrie; dividend, £3 4s. Hurdles—Nayborn; dividend, £11 3s. Hack Hurdles—Kaimate; dividend, £5 16s. Taranaki Cup—Coronet; dividend, £2 4s. Hack Flat—Waylay; dividend, £9 10s. Henui Stakes—Faugh-a-ballagh.

A Sydney admirer of Seahorse took 1000 to 70 about the colt for the Australian Cup before the weights appeared. Judging from the tone of the betting, Major George's crack will not go for the Newmarket Handicap. I never anticipated that he would be started for the latter race, but I class him with Merriwee, Parthian, and Wargod as the candidates possessing the best chances in the Australian Cup.

Several young fellows well known to racing men are included in the number of volunteers for the New Zealand Rough Riders' Contingent, and are now in camp at Potter's Paddock. Their names are Alec Caulton, P. Keith, Geo. Wilkinson, Edward Davis, W. Hickson, H. Hill, W. Austin, and W. J. Maomanemin. They are just the sort required for the job on hand, and those that pass the final tests are sure to give a good account of themselves when they get to South Africa.

The South Auckland Racing Club holds its Annual Meeting, on the Hamilton Racecourse, on Saturday, March 10. The stake-money for the eight events on the programme amounts to 205 sovs, of which 50 sovs is portioned to the South Auckland Cup, one mile and a quarter; 40 sovs to the Handicap Steeplechase, three miles; 30 sovs to the Claudelands Handicap, one mile; and 25 sovs to the Hurdle Race, run over a mile and a half. Mr A. J. Storey, the secretary, will receive nominations for all events on Friday, 16th February, on which day entries will also be received at Mr Blomfield's office, in Durham Street. A glance at the programme, which appears in full elsewhere, will show that the stake-money will be paid in full.

The negotiations which have been carried on for some time past between the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company and Messrs Hunter and Nolan have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and for the future the business of the latter firm will be conducted by the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company. Since commencing in Auckland the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company have greatly extended their business, and the necessity of a live stock branch has long been apparent. The purchase of Messrs Hunter and Nolan's business places the Auckland branch of the company on an equality with the Agency's branches in other districts, and in future the whole of clients' business can be conducted from one establishment. It is pleasing to know that Mr H. O. Nolan will remain with the company as manager of the live stock department. He has for many years been a popular member of the old firm, and his retention of the manager-ship will be pleasing to old and satisfactory to the new clients.

**TE AROHA JOCKEY CLUB'S ANNUAL MEETING.**

[BY PETRONEL.]

The above fixture comes off on Saturday and Monday next, when interesting racing should be forthcoming. At the time of writing, the acceptances are not to hand, so I am somewhat at a disadvantage in making a selection of possible winners. As the task has to be accomplished, I shall choose the following:—

- Maiden Plate.—SWIFTFOOT or DICK.
- Hack Hurdle Race.—SNIDER or HONESTY.
- Jockey Club Handicap.—KNIGHT OF ATHOL 1, ST. ELMO 2, ADMIRAL HAWKE 3.
- Pony Handicap.—MY LORD or RUFUS.
- Miners' Purse.—ST. OUA or KNIGHT OF ATHOL.
- Hack Race.—RADICAL or PICKPOCKET.
- Flying Stakes.—ST. ELMO or BLAISE.