

ATHLETICS.

THE AUSTRALASIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS.

DORMOR'S PROSPECTS.

KEDDELL'S STRENUOUS PROGRAMME.

BEATSON AND McHOLM IN FORM.

(From Our Dunedin Correspondent.)

Preparations are being made locally for the first Otago provincial championship meeting, to be held on the Caledonian Ground on Saturday next, January 24. This meeting will serve as a try-out for the New Zealand championships, to be held on February 7.

Last week New Zealand's prospects in the Australasian championships did not look so bright, and I feared that the shield would go into the hands of the enemy for the time being. The little team has now been strengthened by the inclusion of J. Beatson, the Otago and New Zealand distance champion, and McHolm, hammer thrower, making the best team that could possibly represent New Zealand at the present time. Victoria should be well satisfied with such an all-round combination.

The meeting at Auckland on the 10th inst., at which the Americans competed, brought out some specially interesting performances, and flattered the New Zealand team's chances in the Australasian championships considerably. Dormor was regarded from the first as the bright particular star of the New Zealand side, and his great run in the mile test in 4min. 24 3-5sec. stamps the Auckland as the finest miler New Zealand has ever produced. If memory serves this is the fastest mile ever accomplished by a New Zealand runner in New Zealand, though Hector Burk, of Dunedin, has put up better time "outside," when he ran Wheatley, of Victoria, to a yard in 4min. 23sec. at the Australasian championships at Brisbane. The New Zealand and Australasian record for the mile is Alfred Shrubbs' 4min. 22sec., established in 1905 on the same ground (the Auckland Domain) as Dormor put up the latest performance. Dormor is in great form this season, and if he can but retain it in the Australasian championships we may be prepared for some high-grade performances. I cannot see any Australian or New Zealander beating Dormor in the mile, and, barring accidents, I expect to see Dormor win this event at the Australasian championships. The half-mile also should come within his grasp, but he is likely to meet with more opposition, principally from Victoria if represented by Watson.

Gerald Keddeil is still doing well, but I rather fancy he is working over much. The Southlander is in winning vein and his performances are first-class, but there is not the same reliability and confidence about his fencing that was so marked a feature two years ago. So far Keddeil has proved his superiority over Templeton in the 120yds. hurdles. I should say not because he "fences" better but on account of greater pace between the sticks. At Auckland on Saturday week the Southlander beat Templeton in the first heat by five yards in 15 3-5sec.—a good run, equalling his provincial championship time. Keddeil beat the American again in the final, but could not quite get to Stewart (9yds. and a hurdle down) in 16sec. This looks as if my forebodings about overwork are entirely wrong, and that there is no necessity for undue concern. Perhaps this is confirmed, too, in Keddeil winning the broad jump with 22ft. 7in. (beating Templeton by a foot) and running a good quarter in the one afternoon. It was known that Keddeil was not in good health before he took on the tour with the Americans, and that he was running on his will and nerve more than on his condition. This naturally occasioned some anxiety as to what was likely to happen at the end of the tour, but the champion has put his critics to flight by going better at the end than at the beginning. The week's spell on the steamer going to Australia and light work in Melbourne before the championships I hope will have the effect of turning Keddeil out recuperated and invigorated for the work ahead.

J. Beatson, the Otago and New Zealand three-mile champion, left for Melbourne by the Maunganui on Sunday, and was given an enthusi-

astic send-off by local athletes. It was at first proposed that Beatson should travel to Auckland, compete at the recent meeting, and then join the other members of the New Zealand team, who sailed on Monday, in Sydney, but the Council thought there was no necessity for the extra expenditure, and Beatson accordingly left direct for Melbourne. This arrangement is better, in that it affords the Otago distance runner longer time in Melbourne for training. Beatson will meet with classy competitors in Victoria, and it will take him to be in his best form to catch the judge's eye first. To his list of successes in New Zealand I should like to hear of him adding the three-mile championship of Australasia.

McHolm's fine effort in the 16lb hammer throw at the Auckland meeting on the 10th inst. of 147ft 5in, establishing a fresh Australasian record, gives the Napier man a chance in this event at Melbourne, but he has to reckon with the present Australasian champion, W. O'Reilly, when it comes to the test. Still McHolm must have a big say, and on present form must go very near winning.

The best news so far as Otago is concerned is that arrangements have been made whereby the New Zealand representatives returning from the Australasian championships will come

was taken speaks distressingly of the public interest. The local association will just about clear expenses.

Otago did not have the best of any luck that was going. Though one does not offer that fact as an excuse for defeat, it had, nevertheless, a good deal to do with it. One of the greatest cricketers of his time said that unless a team carried a reasonable amount of luck in its bag that team was always more or less subject to defeat, no matter its calibre. This has particular application to Otago in the latest match. As examples of the luck element and the important part it played, three of Otago's best batsmen were denied the opportunity of making runs—not by reason of bad batting, but by lack of luck, which John Turnicliiff and Albert Knight used to say should be found in every batsman's kit.

In the first innings Watson had his career cut short with a "leg before" decision—always more or less unsatisfactory, particularly to a bowler like Saunders, bowling left arm round the wicket and going away. There is no intention here of doubting the umpire's verdict. The fact is merely stated that such a decision will always be unsatisfactory. In the second innings Watson played one from Saunders hard enough almost to reach the boundary, but the

cricket was one of the best seen on the ground. The basis of Alloo's success was his careful watching of the ball and selecting the right one to hit. The stroke with which he got out was not a stroke at all. He had just reached his century and the excitement of the reception possibly unnerved him for the moment. When the Carisbrook colt next made his stroke the bat appeared to get tangled up in some mysterious fashion, and before he had time to recover his correct position bat and ball met, with the result an easy catch to the bowler. Alloo did not get started in the second innings, but is deserving of all praise for his exhibition in Otago's first strike.

There was a time when to put Alex. Downes in at the fall of the ninth wicket was to confess ignorance of this player's capabilities as a batsman, but the Grange man has gradually worked down to the position. A few years ago there were few who could make runs so attractively. His foot work in those days was wonderfully fine, while his wrist play made the bat like a whip in his hands which he cracked to a merry tune, and the crisp contact he made with the ball were rattled like rifle shots from a musketry corps. All this has changed, but Downes is still pre-eminently our best bowler.



Group of Handicappers who assisted at the big professional sports carnival held in Auckland last week, when in addition to a number of handicap events the New Zealand Championships were decided—Reading from left: Messrs. J. A. Hanson (Taranaki), A. J. Barritt (North Canterbury), J. Collingwood (Feilding), F. H. Burbush (Auckland), W. G. Callender (Hawke's Bay), W. Murdock (Southland).

via the Bluff and will compete at the New Zealand championships at Dunedin on February 7. It was feared that the team might be prevailed upon to go on to Sydney to compete with the Americans there, but having fulfilled their Australasian championships engagement, their next concern is New Zealand's own championship meeting. In addition to the New Zealand champions there will be a strong contingent from Wellington (the Shield holders), a goodly team from Southland, while Canterbury and Auckland are also expected to be well represented. Altogether the championship meeting of 1914 promises to be as fine a gathering as has ever been held.

OTAGO CRICKET.

(From our Dunedin correspondent.)

DUNEDIN, January 17.

Now that the Plunket Shield no longer looms in the eyes of the Otago legislators as the only thing worth playing for there is a proposal afoot to establish a scheme for securing the services of a first-class coach of the Relf type, which did such good work for Auckland. The mistaken policy of the past of getting two men for the salary of one first-class man is not to be repeated.

Public interest was not fired by the Otago-Wellington representative match—the first, by the way, for nine years between the provinces—and the attendances on all three days was poor. The fact that less than £60

ball struck the batsman's foot and rebounded on to his wicket. The Carisbrook groundsman was, more likely to make runs than any other batsman on the Otago side, but the pleasure was denied him.

McFarlane's case, too, is an example of "the little more and how much it is, and the little less and what worlds away." The Albion batsman was giving of his best, playing the bowling with the utmost confidence and freedom, and exhibiting commendable restraint; when stepping back to play Saunders he happened to touch his wicket and dislodge his off bail. McFarlane never promised better, and his short innings of 28 was one of the best exhibitions of the match, if, indeed, it was not the best exhibition of perfect timing, placing and crisp batting. It has always been admitted that McFarlane has all or nearly all the essentials of a great batsman, but even a Trumper has to have his moments of luck. The Albion man's failing is lack of restraint, but he can exercise this when called upon, and against Wellington he was prepared to prove this up to the hilt. In the second innings McFarlane succumbed to one of those brilliant catches which border on the phenomenal, and which are brought off once in a lifetime. To be dismissed off so brilliant a catch is almost an honour. McFarlane probably did not think so.

The batting of Alloo in Otago's first innings was the feature of the match. As an exhibition of virtuous patience and watchfulness it was complete, and as a display of solid

ROWING.

(From our Wanganui Correspondent.)

The Union Boating Club's crews which are engaged at the New Zealand championship regatta, which is to take place at Mercer on the 29th inst., will leave here next Saturday. Altogether some 20 members of the club will be competing, while a large number of their supporters also intend going up to see the racing. The champion four are rowing well, and there are not wanting those who reckon they are quite as good as ever. They have not done any racing this season, and so far have not done any trials, but their form is very fine indeed, and it will take a wonderfully good crew to beat them, given an even distribution of luck. The junior crew is also a good one, and the other crews should all do well in their races. Unfortunately, Archie Sharpe, the club's single sculler, has been ill for a week, and has done no rowing. The spell will not hurt him, provided he makes a good recovery, but at present the indications are against him being sufficiently recovered to race. Still a few days may make a big improvement in him, and if so all will be well. He was sculling so well a couple of weeks ago that his prospects of winning the championship looked very rosy.

On the Saturday following the championship regatta an eight representing the Union Club will meet the Auckland Rowing Club's eight in a challenge race on Auckland Harbour for the Somerville Shield, when, given fine weather, an excellent contest should be witnessed.