

NEW ZEALAND TROTTING CONFERENCE.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The annual conference of delegates from the various trotting clubs throughout New Zealand was held at Wellington on Tuesday last. Mr. J. Rowe, president of the Auckland Trotting Club, presiding over a representative attendance. In presenting his annual address, the president (Mr. J. Rowe) opened his remarks by a brief reference to the two important events of the war last month. By the swift and tragic death of Lord Kitchener the Empire was cast into gloom with a feeling of a great international loss. The late Field-Marshal was one of the greatest figures of modern times, and to him was given the stupendous task of organising the Empire's forces for a struggle far surpassing in magnitude the most gigantic wars in history. It was to be hoped that his great work of raising and setting in motion such an army of millions with all its equipment would be brought to a successful issue. Such an immortal spirit would continue to impel others to carry out his work, and his loss would intensify the determination of the allied forces to conquer in this Titanic struggle for right.

To the loyalty, devotion and self-sacrifice of our gallant Navy we probably owed our all, even at this far outpost of the Empire. To the bulldog courage of the British sailor this Dominion owed its peaceful existence and undoubted prosperity, and that courage had never been more nobly and conspicuously displayed than in the great battle off Jutland. Latest particulars proved that victory again rested with Old England's Sons of the Sea. They had swept the oceans clear for our transports, ammunition and commerce, and by their deeds had strengthened the public confidence in the British Fleet and more firmly established its command of the sea. So as to record the conference's deep sense of the loss sustained by the Army, and to show its appreciation of the gallant deeds of the Navy, he proposed to move in the matter, before resuming his seat, and before any business was proceeded with.

GENEROUS DONATIONS TO PATRIOTIC FUNDS.

The patriotic manner in which clubs had spontaneously contributed to the war funds had exceeded his expectations. In addition to their contributions to the various war funds many clubs had directed into the same channels the whole of the net profits of their race meetings. Should the need become greater, he was sure all clubs would continue to give in the same generous manner.

In addition to the £12,000 odd which constituted the trotting clubs' subscription during the first year of the war, they had been responsible this season for nearly £10,000. This sum was made up in subscriptions to various funds, total net profits of race meetings and war taxes, and did not include, roughly, £30,000 the total amount paid by the trotting clubs as the usual tax imposed annually by the Government. As the war tax was not imposed until November, when this season was well advanced, several clubs were not affected, otherwise the amount would have been much greater.

These figures were apart altogether from those of racing clubs, but some idea could be gathered of what they had done when it was stated that one racing club alone (after devoting £1000 last year) gave this year in net profits and war taxes considerably over £10,000. In addition the same club paid over £10,000 as Government tax the same season. So that when the combined figures of racing and trotting are tabulated they would, he was sure, open the eyes not only of the general public, but trotting men as well.

SUGGESTED MEMORIAL OF PRACTICAL RACING PATRIOTISM.

Mr. Rowe referred to the suggestion made to him of combining the offerings of racing and trotting clubs throughout the Dominion for some acceptable object. Under the War Funds Act it was open for associated clubs either to control and manage their funds themselves or transfer them to the War Funds Council. In the latter case, by divesting themselves of actual responsibility, clubs would still have a full measure of control, for trustees and advisory committees would be appointed, and the council would be guided by any recommendations they might make. The idea, he understood, was to establish a hospital, home or some institution, for the benefit of wounded soldiers, special regard being made to trainers, jockeys and other soldiers who had been directly connected with the sport. Under such a scheme the institution would remain for all time a memorial of practical racing patriotism, and would continue its existence as a home for racing men and other war veterans in years to come. The absorption into a common fund of the enormous sums that racing and trotting clubs had voluntarily dedicated to patriotic purposes would, in time, cause their origin to pass into oblivion, if something on the lines suggested was not brought into being. Furthermore, it would secure lasting recognition of the source of the contributions, and of the sacrifices made in accumulating so large a sum. Wherever the money went it would be used for patriotic purposes; but it remained for the combined clubs to say whether it should be placed in a general or particular fund. The proposal had already been brought under the notice of the Minister of Internal Affairs, the chairman of the War Funds Council, who had voluntarily approved of the scheme.

Reviewing the operations of the affiliated trotting clubs, he found that racing generally, during the season now closing, was of the same high order as before, and public support was well maintained.

With a view to inducing as many men as possible to enlist, the governing body, through its licensing committee, resolved not to grant licenses to men who were eligible for recruiting. Up to the time of the passing of the Military Service Bill the step taken must have gone a long way in the cause of enlistment.

APPOINTMENT OF STIPENDIARY STEWARDS.

The president, in referring to trotting matters, reminded the conference that at the adjourned meeting in January of the last annual conference, in connection with the appointment of stipendiary stewards, a motion was passed on a bare majority basis adopting the executive's report. Some doubts being expressed as to whether it was

an ordinary resolution or a "special resolution," it was decided to obtain a legal opinion, and if it proved to be the latter, requiring a three-fourths majority, the scheme could not come into operation. In the other event, the motion would be deemed carried, and the executive would take the necessary action to give it effect. An opinion was sought from a legal firm, who advised that the motion adopting the report was not proposed as a "special resolution," and coming within the category of an order for promoting, regulating and improving trotting racing, such resolution, although not a special one, was effective. The instructions of the conference were accordingly acted upon, and the thanks of the conference were due to the executive for setting the machinery in motion. Stipendiary stewards had been appointed, and were now prepared to take up their duties on the first of next month.

Meanwhile, however, an application had been received from one of the clubs asking the conference to stay proceedings and have the question as to the validity of the matter tested in the Supreme Court, but in view of the instructions of the conference it felt bound to carry them out. The club now proposed to take action in the court, claiming a declaration that the appointment of stipendiary stewards was ultra vires, and an injunction restraining the conference from proceeding further in the matter. The appointment of stipendiary stewards was inevitable, and the trotting authorities were advised that their procedure was legal. The system would be inaugurated whatever steps any isolated club might take to postpone it. It was a pity that one of their leading clubs should constitute itself a stumbling block in the way of progress.

It was the desire of those in authority to keep abreast of the times, and the association found that the funds provided under the rules were not sufficient to meet requirements, and proposed to increase some of the fees. The Provident Fund was now well established, and should some of its revenue be diverted, it would still be practically self-supporting.

THREE-YEAR-OLD UNHOPPLED TROTTERS.

The suggested inclusion of a race for three-year-old unhoppled trotters in some programmes (in addition to those races already provided for) seemed to meet with favour. The Forbury Park Trotting Club, which was responsible for this, whether it be carried to-day or not, gave proof of its sincerity in the matter by proposing to include in its next summer programme such a race to be called the Forbury Trotting Derby of 250sovs.

The association has long been moving in the direction of short limit racing. Clubs were now recognising that the better the class of competitors they could attract the more popular would their meetings become, and were rapidly and continuously reducing limits and otherwise providing for the best horses.

Following the time-honoured custom, the usual statistics had been tabulated for placing before the conference, showing the operations of the clubs during the past season as follows:—

Woods' Great Peppermint Cure. For Chronic Chest Complaints.

SEASON 1915-1916.

| Club. | Meetings. | Days racing. | No. of races. | Stakes. | Stakes previous year. |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| N.Z. Metropolitan T.C. | 4 | 7 | 72 | 19,800 | 19,800 |
| Auckland T.C. | 3 | 6 | 56 | 9,580 | 8,370 |
| Forbury Park T.C. | 3 | 6 | 48 | 7,945 | 7,735 |
| Canterbury Park T.C. | 2 | 4 | 32 | 5,700 | 5,230 |
| N. Brighton T.C. | 2 | 4 | 32 | 4,635 | 4,030 |
| Otago T.C. | 2 | 4 | 32 | 3,670 | 3,360 |
| Ashburton T.C. | 2 | 4 | 32 | 2,885 | 2,685 |
| Greymouth T.C. | 2 | 4 | 32 | 2,600 | 2,420 |
| Wanganui T.C. | 1 | 2 | 14 | 1,350 | 1,000 |
| Gore T.C. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1,105 | 1,105 |
| Westport T.C. | 1 | 2 | 16 | 1,110 | 1,020 |
| Oamaru T.C. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1,000 | 700 |
| S. Canterbury T.C. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 960 | 680 |
| Winton T.C. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 750 | 130 |
| Waimate Plains T.C. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 630 | 440 |
| Waikato T.C. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 600 | 500 |
| Wellington T.C. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 595 | 535 |
| Manawatu T.C. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 565 | 430 |
| S. Wairarapa T.C. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 500 | 500 |
| Inangahua T.C. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 500 | 425 |
| Nelson T.C. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 450 | 450 |
| Poverty Bay T.C. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 400 | 330 |
| Westland T.C. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 400 | 300 |
| Kaikoura T.C. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 315 | 110 |
| Mariborough T.C. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 300 | 300 |
| Total | 37 | 59 | 464 | 68,335 | 68,225 |

It would be noticed that £68,335 was given away in stakes by the combined trotting clubs, being a little over £5000 in excess of last year. In addition to the trotting clubs' stakes, owners also received approximately £7000 subscribed by racing clubs for 90 trotting events included on racing programmes, making an aggregate of £75,000 given in stakes during the season.

In conclusion, Mr. Rowe moved that the conference, recognising the great ability and distinguished services rendered by Earl Kitchener, one of England's greatest generals, desired to place on record its sense of the immense loss sustained by the Empire in his sudden and tragic death.

And further, that the conference express its deep sympathy with the dependents of all those lost in the North Sea battle off Jutland, and place on record its appreciation of the gallant manner in which our sailors upheld the glorious traditions of the British Navy.

W. P. Sommerville,

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FLOATING FACTORY DESTROYED BY FIRE.—THE STEAMER HORATIO ABLAZE AT LEITH, SOUTH GEORGIA, WHERE SHE HAD BEEN FITTED OUT FOR BOILING OIL FROM WHALE CARCASSES.