



The Manawatu Racing Club never had better racing and such all-round large fields as at their recent meeting. A variety of circumstances contributed to the great success thereof. First of all it was a patriotic meeting—as all this club's meetings have been since the commencement of the war—and owners had nominated a good deal more freely than on any previous occasion, as was the case at the Feilding meeting at Easter time, also due to some extent because of the cutting out of the Wellington Racing Club's autumn meeting and to fewer days of racing. Secondly, the expected meeting of Desert Gold and Biplane, who were engaged in the Awapuni Gold Cup and Manawatu Stakes, drew many to the scene who would not otherwise have journeyed there at all. There were other reasons, too. The best horses in the country, with very few exceptions, were expected to take part, and there was the promise of a most interesting meeting in this centrally-situated locality. The meeting certainly had an educational value. The huge totalisator turnover showed that very much larger sums of money can be handled with existing totalisator facilities. The sum of £91,310 was machined for the two days, as against £39,378 last year, when the meeting was held four weeks later. Very little money appeared to be shut out and the payment of dividends was prompt. This was rendered the more easy because the size of the dividends left fewer investors to receive and fewer tickets to be paid on. Several New Zealand clubs this year have had the experience of seeing the investments of last year doubled. Not many, however. One-day meetings have shown correspondingly large increases all round, but no two-day meeting can show such a result as that of the Manawatu Racing Club. The attendance was far and away the largest ever seen at Awapuni, motor traffic was the heaviest, and the fields all round the best; indeed, the meeting in all respects was a record one. Awapuni as a racing resort never received such an advertisement. The course was never in better condition and there were no accidents. Congratulations are due to the club and stipendiary officers, secretary, handicapper, starter, and to the owners who helped to make the big patriotic meeting what it was.

The Manawatu Racing Club, through its members and executive members, have done more to popularise meetings at Awapuni in recent years through adopting the policy of helping the military, before camps were fully organised elsewhere, and by running all meetings with the object of helping all patriotic purposes within their power. A few other clubs have adopted a similar course and all have been assisting in various ways with their funds. The meeting last week was boomed for all it was worth, and not without good reason, for it was fully expected that at least three-fourths of the best horses in commission would be there, including the stars, and the people who assembled in their thousands were only disappointed in one particular. It was a serious disappointment, however, that awaited them. The news that Biplane had been scratched the previous evening for the Awapuni Gold Cup, in which they had hoped to see him measure strides with Desert Gold, fell like a thunderbolt, and disappointment could only have been exceeded had Desert Gold been scratched instead. This would have come about if there had been any rain in the morning, but the day was fine and the mare was on hand to run. Biplane was regarded as a sure starter, but there was always a doubt that the mare might not compete if the going was made holding by rain. There has always been that reservation about Desert Gold's programme. Biplane won all but one of his engagements in Australia in the spring. Desert Gold had been there in the late summer and beginning of the autumn and had met and beaten, amongst others, the best of the horses that Biplane had beaten, and now they were not to meet for the first time to decide which was the better of the pair, because, acting on the advice of his trainer, Mr. Greenwood had decided on withdrawing Biplane from

the mile and a-quarter event. Mr. Greenwood's reasons were not made known in the announcement of the colt's withdrawal, and it was only after the Awapuni Gold Cup had been run for and won by Desert Gold, and the demonstration at the absence from the field of Biplane, that the resolution of the stewards, which appears in another column, was handed in to the press room. What Mr. Greenwood's explanation was was not made known, but in an interview with that owner he informed a number of pressmen that Mason had advised him on arrival that it would be perhaps injurious to the colt to start him, as he had not been able to do sufficient work with the colt to fit him to take on the crack mare. Until Mr. Greenwood arrived at Palmerston North Mason had not seen Mr. Greenwood for nearly a fortnight, but claims to have given him the best advice possible under the circumstances, knowing the issues that were sure to be at stake. Mr. Greenwood does not bet, but knows that other people do, and he respected Mason's judgment knowing that he had

ests of his employer, the colt—the only good one he had under his care—and of all concerned. While he had no interest himself in any bets that might possibly have been made on the probable result, he considered he had taken the proper course, as there was sure to have been a lot of betting on the day on the totalisator and contingent on the horses meeting, and his reputation as a trainer had to be considered. Deeley, who rode the colt in his Australian engagements and had ridden him work at Awapuni and could form an idea how the colt was, would bear him out in saying that Biplane was not ready for so severe an ordeal.

There are always two sides to a story. The foregoing is the side that is put forward for the scratching of Biplane. Its weakness, however, is in that it was left until the day before the meeting to finally decide, when owner and trainer met to discuss the situation. These matters are more often than not settled after final gallops and when some idea of the probable opposition and

ing clubs in the Dominion) has grossly violated the ethics of the turf by scratching his colt when everyone expected him to run. They may have power to refuse his entries, or to refuse the entries of any horses trained by R. J. Mason for the part he has played, but most people will ask: do the circumstances warrant this? It is a pity that the evidence upon which the club's decision is based has not been made public.

In New Zealand all betting is expected to be done per medium of the totalisator, as the following from part iv., part of rule 1, relating to the powers of stewards and committees, indicates: "They shall have power to determine questions arising in relation to the totalisator and investments made thereon, and persons using the same, but not disputes or claims in relation to bets not made upon the totalisator, except that they may declare all bets off made on a horse, the owner, trainer or jockey of which is found guilty of corrupt practice, or is for any reason disqualified for the race." Biplane was scratched for the race, not disqualified, and neither his owner or trainer have been found guilty of a corrupt practice. A later rule, 11 of the same part iv., says: "If any case occur which in their opinion is not provided for in these rules it shall be determined by the stewards in such manner as they think fit." In this instance a case has occurred which has been provided for in the rules—an owner has scratched his horse in accordance with the rules and has committed no breach thereof, and no rules allow of an injustice being inflicted upon an owner. They are framed for his guidance and his protection as much as for the guidance of the stewards and their protection, and must not be wrongly construed. Long ago this very rule was tested, and it was held that it related to carrying out the programme in which it appeared and related to happenings in the running off of races, but did not give power to stewards to do anything that might be found to be unjust. Is the finding of the Manawatu stewards a just one? Will it be dealt with by another tribunal?

Before passing judgment upon the so-called side-stepping tactics of owners we should endeavour to weigh the circumstances fairly and squarely. We have read a good deal on this subject from time to time in New Zealand, and during the successful campaign of Desert Gold in Australia the term was applied to the owner of that mare, but we did not hesitate to say that the New Zealand sportsman had acted within his rights. A heavy fall of rain occurred before one of the races, and on inspecting the course the mare was at once withdrawn. It was, however, when she was withdrawn at the very last moment from the mile race when everyone was looking for her to meet the Australian mile champion that the crowd were disappointed and made some demonstration of disapproval. Mr. Lowry had mapped out a different programme for his mare. She was in the weight-for-age mile and a-half race the same afternoon, and in that race she had Wallace Isinglass—an easier proposition, certainly—against her, and duly won, and Mr. Lowry's explanation that he desired to give the mare a race over the longer distance in order to test her for her long-distance engagements at Randwick was generally accepted by good sportsmen. How could it well be otherwise? The mare was on a money-earning mission for a good purpose, and Mr. Lowry was well within his rights in acting as he did. Mr. Greenwood is being accused of side-stepping now. If he has done what can be so construed he has given an explanation, which the public can accept or reject as they feel disposed, but that he has not been a side-stepper during his racing career we have had ample evidence. No owner has so consistently opposed Desert Gold and other of Mr. T. H. Lowry's horses as Mr. Greenwood. With what results we all know, but we can instance that Satala ran second to Desert Gold twice and that Nones occupied a like position behind that mare time after time in classic events.



THE ARRIVAL OF THE DEFENDER OF LIEGE IN PARIS.—The campaign of GENERAL LEMAN (x) remains one of the most epic of the war. It was he who at Liege sustained heroically the German onslaught. Forty thousand Germans fell before Liege during the Belgian resistance, the effect of which was to give the Allies some days in which to prepare for the attack.

had a very anxious time when the colt was placed out of action with a bad foot for several months, and that after racing in Wanganui, when not thoroughly himself, he had had trouble to get the colt fit again to run for one of his engagements at the C.J.C. meeting. This he won against not very strong opposition as things turned out. Mr. Greenwood reminded those present that when, just after Biplane's defeat by Estland, he had been cabled to by the "Sun" newspaper in Sydney asking if he would be prepared to run a match against Desert Gold, he had replied that the colt was so out of sorts that it would likely take considerable time before he could be got back to form. We may here remark, incidentally, that Mr. Lowry, who was interviewed in Australia on behalf of the same paper, said that it was so uncertain getting horses ready for a contest on a given date and that the course might not be quite right, that match-making did not appeal to him. Mr. Greenwood said he was prepared to take the full responsibility for what had been done, and Mason, interviewed, stated that he had adopted the course he had done in the inter-

the weather can be gauged. This particular event was lifted out of the ordinary. Neither of the expected contestants were like heavily supported candidates for a Melbourne or a New Zealand Cup. Any pre-post betting would be small, and in any case dependent upon a start. That view has never been taken seriously by the racing powers that be, who take the stand that if people will bet—illegally, they call it—other than per medium of the totalisator, they deserve to fall in, though on at least one occasion, when they disqualified The Rover and his connections for scratching for a Grand National Hurdle Race at the very last moment, it was given out that the horse was in the hands of the bookmakers, even to his scratching. In the before-mentioned resolution the stewards express regret that they could not disqualify Biplane for the meeting under existing rules, but they have made a recommendation to the committee not to accept nominations from Mr. Greenwood in future, or of horses trained by R. J. Mason. The stewards hold that Mr. Greenwood (who has been a good supporter of racing and a good patron of their club and of lead-