

The Racing and Trotting Conferences held annually in Wellington have been of excellent service to the respective branches of sport, and the expense of sending delegates thereto, at one time an item of expenditure that struggling clubs were opposed to incurring, is not now objected to. All clubs, large and small, send their representatives, who have a voice in the deliberations. The rules of racing, never so perfect, occasionally are found requiring amendment and additions notwithstanding and that various clubs have members who make a study of the rules and are desirous of seeing the code kept up to date, is evident from the list of notices of motion that are dealt with by the racing board of control. The order paper this year was not as long as in some previous years, nor were there many matters that promised a deal of discussion. The various clubs had met prior to the day and directed their delegates how to vote on certain questions, though doubtless a few would be given a free hand so far as some of the suggested amendments and additions were concerned.

The metropolitan, suburban and country clubs should be brought nearer together as the result of the Racing Conference passing the rule regarding the future composition of district committees. Hitherto the number for each of the eight metropolitan districts has been thirteen, five country club delegates and eight from the metropolitan clubs. This lop-sided arrangement was unfair, and threatened to be the cause of trouble, but the fact was recognised and the country clubs were met in a fine spirit, with the result that the future composition of the district racing committees will be five metropolitan and five country delegates, the chairman from the metropolitan five to have the casting vote. Nothing could be fairer than this to our mind. Probably after the war we may have a new metropolitan district or two added to the number already in existence, which were originally arranged on the basis of one for each province. It may be said that while the country clubs of Auckland were represented on the District Committee for that province there had never been any friction. They had pulled well together and the country clubs had received fair treatment. That, however, had not been an all-round experience, and in consequence a change was sought, and the fairness of the suggested change has been recognised by its adoption.

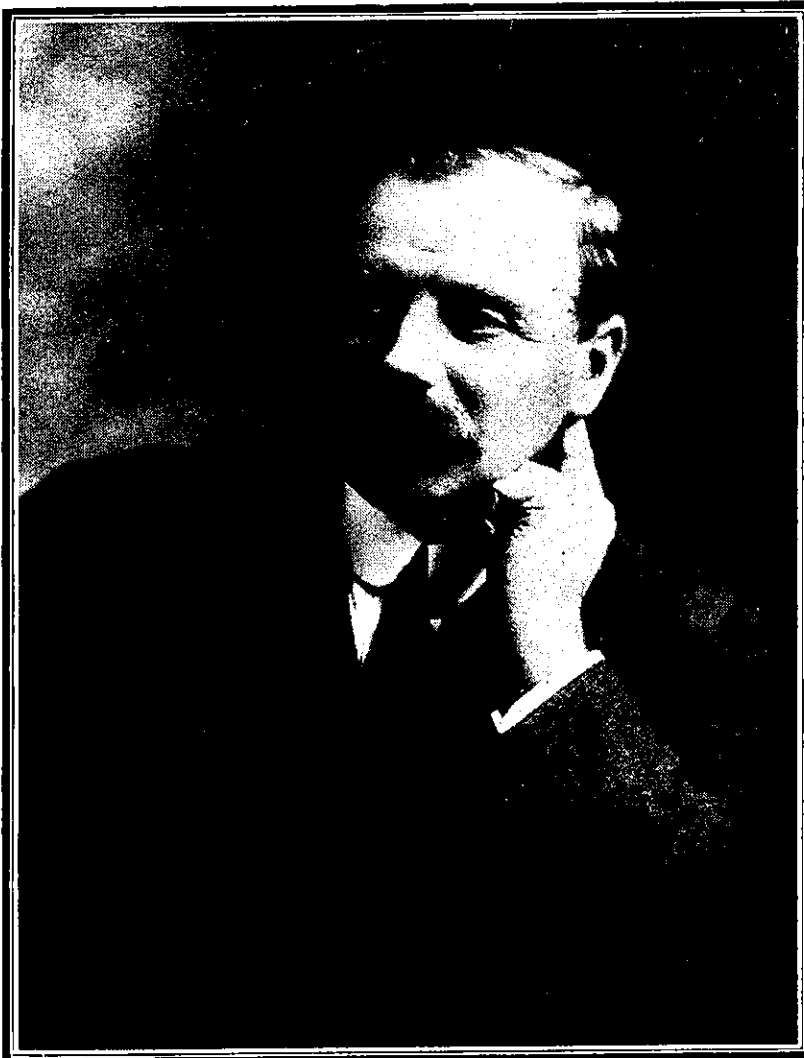
There are obvious objections to paid officials sitting on district committees, but the proposed rule which would have put an end to the practice was not carried by the Racing Conference, for the evident reason that the services of some very useful men would have been lost. Sentiment no doubt carried the day. We did not expect the proposed alteration to Rule 2, Part VII., bearing on the receiving of telegraphed entries delayed in transit and not reaching the secretary before the advertised time. There must be finality in the time for closing down, and the old system of accepting post and telegraph marks of entries lodged before the advertised time led to many complications when in vogue, and we do not want possible repetitions of that sort of thing. The suggested new rule 5a to Part XVI., requiring that all horses in which the same owner has any interest be bracketed on the totalisator, was in the right direction. One of the difficulties, however, that owners who had parted with horses when retaining a contingency interest say with regard to stakes won, would be in becoming acquainted as to whether the new owners intended nominating, accepting or making final payments for races in which the sellers had horses engaged. The new owners, too, would require to make themselves wise to the intentions of those from whom they had purchased or leased horses. The registration of partnership or contingency interests in the official calendar should be sufficient. The penalty for omitting to remind secretaries of registered interests seems severe enough at the minimum of £5.

The Dunedin Jockey Club's suggested alteration for a 7.0 minimum in all flat races other than w.f.a. races received a good deal of support at the Conference last week but was again defeated. It would have been carried two years ago had the unanimous wish of thirteen Auckland clubs been carried out by the representatives of those clubs. The free-hand vote settled it then. The Dunedin Jockey Club is consistent in that it has adopted the 7.0 minimum. All clubs that favour this sensible provision should follow the lead of those that are carrying it out. If only they applied it in hack and minor races where meeting after meeting a proportion of the runners carry over-weight for the reason that jockeys cannot be got under 7.0, others would follow, and the practice would likely become general in a very short while. Though the object of the mover of the proposal that the crouchers should at the discretion of the stipendiary stewards be obliged to lengthen

have nevertheless been lengthening their stirrups, and it has been stated that the same thing is now noticeable in Australia.

The V.R.C. Grand National meeting was concluded on Saturday, and the chief event, the Grand National Steeplechase, was won by Cobram, a gelding that has had no end of experience and racing, and successes and defeats, and some falls, two of which laid the well-known horseman J. N. McGregor out for lengthy periods. Cobram ranks now as one of the veterans of the game. He was well down in the weights with only 9.9 to carry, against 11.11 on Booligal, who was a strong favourite when the meeting started. Raheny, who was third, is a veteran, too, about the oldest of the competitors, and carried 10.4. There were about thirteen starters and New Zealand was not represented—that is to say, by anything owned in the Dominion. It would have been interesting had Master

was an unusually large proportion of falls or mistakes of one kind or other. At the Wellington meeting there were some falls, too, but on the whole the jumping revealed the best qualities of the horses, and some of the contests were particularly entertaining and exciting. A number of more than ordinarily useful competitors there were not seen quite at their best. A few may have improved by the time the New Zealand Grand Nationals are on, but it is to be feared that the best has been seen of several horses that have raced well in the past in flat and hurdle events and from which greater things over country were being looked for. The steeplechase course at Trentham lent itself to horses in the developing stage, and racing there would benefit some of them required for more formidable tasks at Riccarton. There were no serious casualties or deaths through accidents to any of the jumpers at the meeting, and Wellington meetings in that respect have been very fortunate for a long time.



MR. A. L. RAVEN, who is a candidate for the position of steward to the Auckland Racing Club, three of which office bearers are to be elected at the annual meeting. [Crown Studios.]

Their stirrups was defeated, it may perhaps have the effect of causing some of the riders to do so without compulsion. We are sure that some of these "monkey-on-a-stick" men cannot do justice to their mounts, and more particularly when it comes to riding over fences. We have long been satisfied that many of the accidents which have resulted in the stipendiary stewards taking action for careless or foul riding would not have happened had riders concerned not been perched on the necks of their mounts and acting more like passengers than pilots. Riders become accustomed to the short stirrups, but as for controlling their mounts in that style they are not in it with the old-time exponents of riding who got as close to their horses as possible. We do not see horsemen trying to ride rough horses in that style. Charlie Jenkins is an example of a horseman that could ride a rough one with the best, and for a long period he had more winning rides than any other horseman in New Zealand, and, like Bob Derritt, the late Bob Reay, Wally Clifford and other noted horsemen, did not ride short. It is a fact that most horsemen who imitated Sloan crouch in England with more or less success

Strowan, Waimai and Bon Reve, and a few more of our most useful horses at their best, been on the scene. They, however, were doing useful service in interesting lovers of the game at Trentham, though Waimai was not seen to the same advantage as the other pair.

Some time ago a writer in a southern paper remarked that Hawke's Bay had produced more good steeplechase horses than any other part of New Zealand, and as if to give strength to his contention and his evident belief, mentioned the names of several horses of note, unconsciously paying an unintended compliment to the Wanganui and other provincial districts where some of them were bred. Hawke's Bay undoubtedly breeds many good horses in every department of the racing game, but the education and development of the jumpers bred there has been somewhat neglected of late. Though there must surely be useful material on some of the stations, only an odd new-comer to the game worth talking about put in an appearance at the recent meetings held at Napier Park and Hastings, where the country was not formidable and there

After the Hawke's Bay autumn meeting, where Pursefiller won a double, that mare was in the boom for the Wanganui May meeting and Auckland Great Northern meeting, but missed the final acceptance for the Auckland meeting, after Wanganui. Master Strowan and Gang Awa' were most talked of in a Grand National double connection. Master Strowan has further distinguished himself in the interval by winning the Wellington Steeplechase, and he cannot receive more than 12.7 in the New Zealand Grand National. After the Great Northern meeting Waimai and Bon Reve were most talked of in connection with leading events at Riccarton, and Bon Reve in the interval has come out as a 'chaser and won two out of three races over the fences, while Waimai has only raced once and did not excite the same enthusiasm as was shown after his Great Northern display. Bon Reve will hardly be trained on now for hurdle events, and may be looked upon as a likely candidate for the cross-country event of the year. His class is so good that he will take some beating, and a win in Canterbury for the son of Boniform in either of the chief jumping races there—and more particularly the Grand National Steeplechase—would excite no end of interest, as he was bred there and won his chief flat races there for one of his breeders. These include the Stewards' Handicap, in which he dead-heated with Warstep, and the C.J.C. New Zealand Derby, in which he carried the colours of Mr. W. G. Stead. Bred as he is from a rare staying family, it now seems only a matter of standing a winding-up for him to finish up by winning even more over obstacles than he has done on the flat, and his two Derbies, C.J.C. and Great Northern, and Stewards' Handicap and other successes, brought in over £3700, when he was only three years old, to his former owner. Already he has done what no other dual Derby winner in New Zealand has succeeded in accomplishing. A preparation for steeplechasing is less severe than for hurdle racing, and horses will stand training for either hurdles or country and the racing over obstacles with a greater prospect of keeping sound for such events than in training for flat racing. Bon Reve, Master Strowan, Sleight of Hand, Crib and others of our good jumping horses have at one time or other been under suspicion of unsoundness, and each have been raced on the flat, over hurdles and country.

On Thursday last at the Racing Conference Sir George Clifford referred to a suggestion in his annual report that beyond necessary expenses and upkeep all profits from race meetings be devoted to war purposes. He suggested that all clubs should be circularised with the object of gaining their assent to the use of their funds for war loans or for patriotic purposes. From word he had received from a number of clubs he was sure that all the clubs would fall in with the idea. A motion in this respect was carried unanimously.