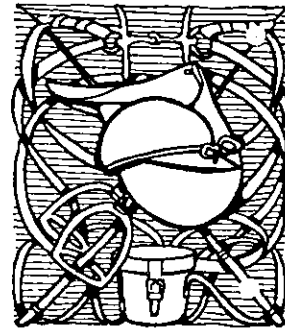


RACING NEWS



NEW ZEALAND RACING CONFERENCE.

IMPORTANT MATTERS CONSIDERED.

ESSENTIALITY OF RACING IN WAR TIME.

BOUNDEN DUTY TO CONTINUE.

The annual conference of the New Zealand Racing Conference was held in Wellington on Thursday, about 40 delegates from the various clubs being present, the president (Sir Geo. Clifford) occupying the chair. In presenting his annual address the president said:—

"Our meeting to-day brings us nearly to the fourth anniversary of the first blow struck by Germany in her crime-stained attempt to force a despotic yoke upon us. Relentless war with far worse than the traditional horrors of war still persecutes the world. Every Briton worthy of the name has striven to bear his individual part in the universal resistance, and all sections of the community have view with each other in collective endeavours. The exceptions are branded with an indelible shame. In this common effort the racing organisation of the Dominion has borne its conspicuous share. Enemies of racing have told us that our continuance of it during war time is a heartless mockery—we retort that it is a bounden duty. The supply of chargers is essential to the equipment of an army even where the modern motor-driven tanks and aircraft are available. Examples of this are frequent in recent operations in France, Palestine and Mesopotamia, and only an ignoramus would deny the necessity of the racecourse test for the effective horsing of cavalry. All the warring Governments have had the foresight to preserve the cream of the turf for this purpose, and, not least, our shrewd adversaries. Every conceivable preparation for future wars is ever in their minds, and they know well that equine courage and endurance are qualities only obtainable by the use of thoroughbred sires. While racing is thus essential to complete military efficiency, we claim for it that it presents no obstruction to war work, that it offers an antidote to the dangerous gloom engendered by continuous foreboding of possible and impossible disasters, and that the large and ungrudged revenue derived from it is of material assistance to the Treasury. As to the last consideration, it is calculated that racing clubs have paid in taxation for this season about £180,000. Voluntary donations since the outbreak of war probably exceed £100,000, and the subscriptions to War Loans £50,000. The taxation paid during the past four years will have reached and probably exceeded £640,000, and that it has not mounted to a still greater sum is the fault of the Government, and not of the clubs. We have readily submitted to the temporary curtailment of the days of racing, but we fail to understand why access to courses should be purposely made difficult when it is perfectly obvious that the railways are sacrificing a very highly profitable business for no perceptible or disclosed advantage.

PROPOSAL TO FURTHER AUGMENT WAR FUNDS.

"We have opponents—some are curiously self-persuaded that we are the central figures of a nest of iniquity. With these imaginative gentlemen who have probably rarely, if ever, trod a racecourse in their lives, and who consider it not unseemly to utilise the war in furthering their unreasoning hostility, we cannot deal. Argument and proof are equally ineffective with the invincibly ignorant. There are, however, others who are honestly unconvinced that good and not evil accrues from present racing—I have already said something on this head, but I propose to ask you in committee to work into practical shape a proposal to devote all clear profits of all racing clubs

for the duration of the war to war purposes. This would be more than any other institution has achieved, and will answer those of our friends who may have doubts about the expediency of our perseverance. They may also have forgotten that owners of racing stables owe it to men who have been in their service perhaps for many years, perhaps a lifetime, not to cut off suddenly their means of subsistence.

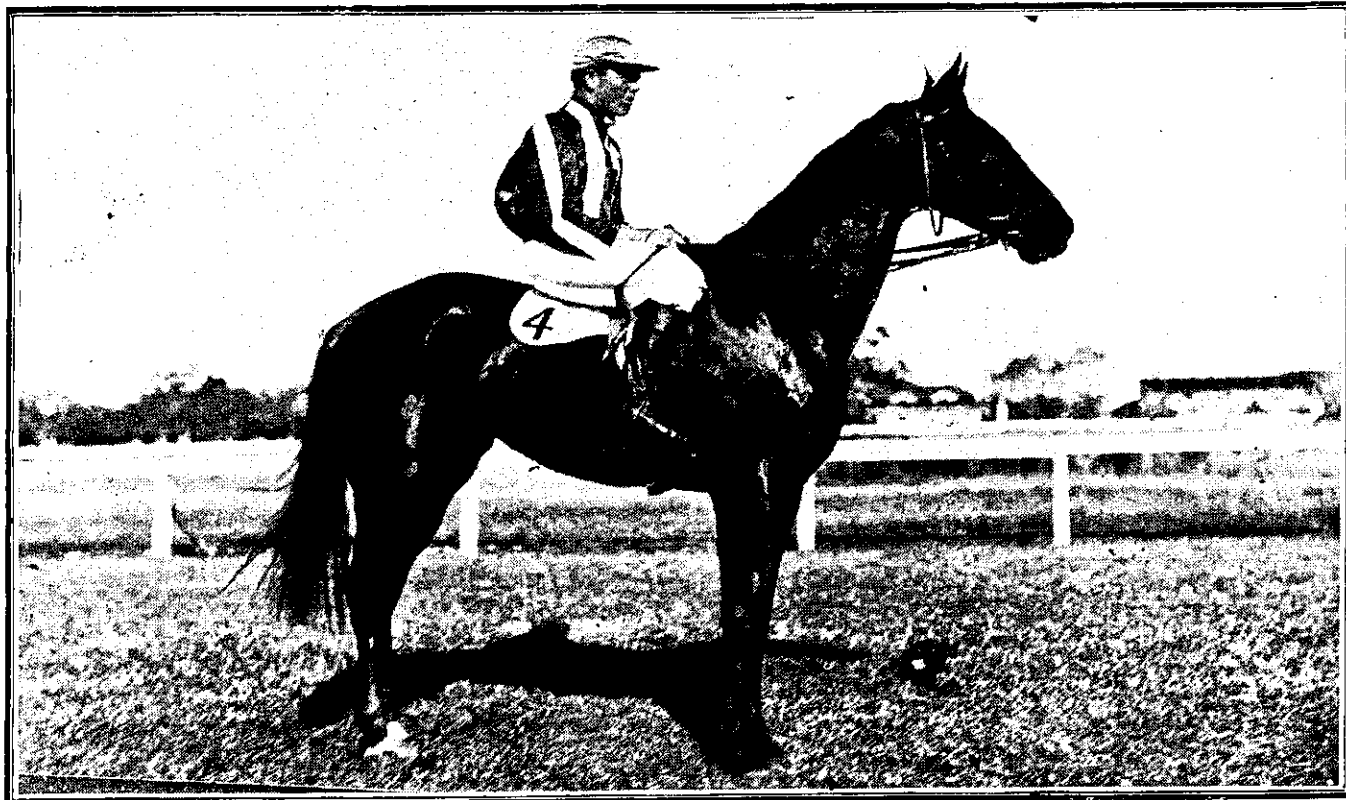
ACHIEVEMENTS OF PAST SEASON.

"We may well be proud of the achievements during the past season of New Zealand horses in Australia. We have had large attendances to witness excellent racing on our own courses; we may be assured that these crowds would not have overcome the obstacles confronting them without the keenest love of a recreation, the general honesty of which they are not slow to recognise. The stipendiary stewards have, in unobtrusive ways, helped to create this confidence by their influence and watchfulness. However, malpractice, where it occurs, is rarely rooted in

with satisfaction. Fresh blood of the best strains cannot fail in so favourable a climate to make its influence felt. The records of the best imported mares of the past form a sign-post towards success for the stud master of these later times. For the future we have only to persevere consistently in the policy which the conference has throughout pursued. Comparison of the present with the past well justifies it. None can quote any country in the world which has done so much as our own to promote clean racing for the benefit of its supporters. Where else do we find the bookmakers barred? Where else are proprietary clubs non-existent? Where else is every penny earned by racing institutions devoted to the maintenance of the sport? Our policy has been to gain the confidence of the people by removing all grounds of suspicion. Let us pursue that policy without fear or favour, and if we are but true to ourselves, no fictitious opposition from adversaries without knowledge of our methods or understanding of our principles will avail to injure us."

tailed by the war still raging in Europe, it is essential that many clubs should devote some of their profits to imperative improvements to their appointments. In some cases those needed improvements were urgent ones when the war started, and are ever so much more so now. We trust that during the coming season many of these improvements will be undertaken.

"Racing during the season just closing has maintained a good standard. The class of horses racing has not shown any deterioration. Owing no doubt to the curtailment of racing, fields in many instances have increased in size, and have been occasionally quite unwieldy, especially over short courses. Notwithstanding the large fields often engaged, interference in running from carelessness or otherwise still diminishes. We are pleased to state that we have not found it necessary to challenge the running of many horses during the past year, and in those instances where corrupt practices have been proved, the inevitable punishment has followed. It is a matter for congratulation that in some cases



Mr. H. Brooker's blk g KAHUMANGU, 6yrs., by Papakura—Anser Anser, winner of the Vittoria Hurdle Handicap (1½ miles) on the opening day of the Wellington Racing Club's winter meeting. B. Brooker in the saddle.

the sport of racing; it springs from the excrescences which we have long aimed at extirpating. In these efforts we have not had that full co-operation from the authorities which we had a right to expect. If illegal betting were rigorously suppressed, and the illegality somewhat extended, we should remove most of the inducements to offences on the turf. The paucity of appeals for the year may be a sort of testimony to the good conduct of the sport. We have to thank Mr. C. P. Skerrett, K.C., and Mr. O. S. Watkins for their assistance on the solitary appeal decided by us.

SAD LOSS TO RACING COMMUNITY.

"We have had to mourn sad losses since we met. We shall miss in our deliberations the Hon. J. D. Ormond, whose cerise jacket was the most prominent of all racing colours on our courses, and whose experience and counsel were so valuable to us on the conference, and Mr. Murdoch McLean, who often sat with us, Mr. G. P. Donnelly has also passed away, an enthusiast in racing as in all he undertook, and Mr. J. F. Hartland, one of the best and most courteous of secretaries.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF BREEDING.

"Many importations of thoroughbred stallions and mares during the past 12 months will have been noted

STIPENDIARY STEWARDS COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The Stipendiary Stewards Committee presented the following report:—

"The control and management of race meetings by clubs continues to show improvement generally. Officials in most instances endeavour to more strictly abide by the Rules of Racing, and are quick to take advantage of suggestions likely to aid the management of their meetings. It is, however, a matter of regret that effective cleansing of racecourses is still sadly retarded by non-employment of efficient racecourse detectives. The public are entitled to this protection on our racecourses, and will no doubt one day demand it. It is also more than apparent that bookmaking is still rampant, and that a vast amount of illegal betting is at present done on or near racecourses, so that race clubs and the Government are losing large sums of money each year through betting being diverted from its proper channel. This could be mitigated by the adoption of a proper detective system. Although numerous prosecutions under the Gaming Act for bookmaking have taken place during the year past and in many cases large fines inflicted on conviction, it is a matter for comment that punishment of that nature has not had the desired effect.

"Notwithstanding the conditions en-

where efforts have been made to tamper with jockeys and others connected with stables, the culprits have been severely punished. The guessor or spiler is one of the greatest menaces to clean sport.

"Despite the war and curtailment of racing the volume of totalisator investments will apparently show an increase as compared with the 1916-17 season. Practically the only complaints made by the public under this head have been due to insufficient accommodation provided for both receiving and paying by a few racing clubs. This increased accommodation or convenience is a matter which should engross the attention of the clubs.

"Notwithstanding that quite a number of jockeys have been called to the colours during the season, the list of licensed jockeys is again a very lengthy one, and contains the names of many who appear to be in no way qualified to hold a license. We have pleasure in stating that generally the conduct of jockeys during the season has been good.

"We wish to reiterate our opinion that it is essential in the interests of good and efficient racing that no appointment to positions of judge or clerk of scales should be of an honorary nature. It is obvious that as racing has now become a huge business that so far as possible practical

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