



A cable to relatives in Canterbury brought last week an announcement of the death, through accident—the falling of a horse—of Mr. Edward Dennis O'Rorke, only son of the late Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives, Sir Maurice O'Rorke. It was with pleasure that many of the Aucklanders' friends were looking forward to meeting him again on his native heath. An announcement to the effect that he intended to return to New Zealand shortly appeared in one of the Auckland daily papers only a few days before. In a letter, the deceased had expressed a longing to be back partaking of the joys of the 'chase racing and fishing, and sent a message to say that he was looking forward to the close of the war to enable him to do so. It was for the purpose of educating members of their family that Mr. and Mrs. O'Rorke decided a few years before the outbreak of the war to take up their residence in England for a time. The war started, and while the father volunteered and was giving his services as a remount purchaser, of which he had had previous experience, his two eldest sons had commissions in the Army, one, Captain Dennis O'Rorke, paying the extreme penalty, while the other, Maurice, was twice wounded. Eddie O'Rorke, as we remember him first, was a graceful and capable horseman, and from find to finish an enthusiastic huntsman, who from a boy followed the Pakuranga Hounds, gained experience, and was always in the first flight with members of that and other clubs in New Zealand. He also hunted with some packs at Home prior to becoming master of the Pakuranga Hunt, with whose members and the farmers he and Mrs. O'Rorke were very popular.

It is surmised that it was in the hunting field that the late Mr. O'Rorke met his death, and that after a hunting career with its attendant risks which had extended to nearly forty years without a break until the war almost put a stop to the sport in some parts at Home. Well horsed in New Zealand—and no one knew the Auckland country and parts of the south better—the subject of this note had had an extensive experience. He was always in request as a judge at shows when not exhibiting, riding or driving himself. He was a horseman of all-round ability, and won races on the flat and over fences, played polo, representing Auckland and also Canterbury in Saville Cup contests and against Indian and Australian teams, and captained the Auckland Polo Club. He raced at various times some useful horses, chiefly 'chasers, and was interested occasionally in others, and was a patron of the stables of E. J. Rae, who is one of the long-time members of the Pakuranga Hunt. It was in Rae's hands that a number of the deceased sportsman's horses won. No one will regret more the end of a patron who loved the jumping game as he does himself. There are, indeed, friends everywhere of the deceased who will remember him because he was a gentleman and a sportsman. The many services he did for racing, hunting, and our Agricultural Association's shows will not be forgotten. Mrs. O'Rorke and family will have the sympathy of friends throughout the Dominion.

A further list of weights for the Auckland R.C. summer meeting were issued on time by Mr. McManemin last week, and completed the handicap events for the opening day thereof. The acceptances will require attention on Friday before 5 o'clock, and at the same time the final payments for the Shortland Plate, Auckland Cup, Railway Handicap, Great Northern Foal Stakes, Forty-fifth Great Northern Derby and Twenty-fourth Royal Stakes fall due. The final payments for the Welcome Stakes and Great Northern Guineas are already in, thus making, with the Islington Plate, seven fixed weight races other than handicaps to be decided during the four days, or thirty-two races in all. This is a pretty formidable array of valuable racing events to be compressed into a period commencing on Thursday

(Boxing Day), December 26, and ending on Saturday, January 4, making, with three days of trotting and pacing sandwiched between, a very heavy bill-of-fare for the most ardent of racegoers. As a matter of fact, within the boundaries of Greater Auckland there will be racing on seven days out of nine, a Sunday intervening, Tuesday, December 31, and Friday, January 3, being days on which there will be none. Thus both amusements are liberally provided, and thereafter the most ardent followers of the sport can take a short spell before racing is gone on with in other parts of the province. This will be from week to week for another three months, making up for lost time as it were, as we have had only four days' racing and two days' trotting for the last eight months in the province. Thus we are to have a big feast after a famine, and the greatest gourmand should soon have his fill of racing without going beyond the boundaries looking for more variety dishes. He can have it amongst the mixed audiences in the North, where some of the bushmen, gumdiggers, dairymen, cattle and sheep farmers, and the business people in the country towns get very few opportunities of witnessing racing at all. There

to them still away there will be no Christmas until their safe return, but there is evidence on every hand that while there will be those who will not be partaking of sport offerings so keenly as usual, there will be thousands glad indeed that the festive season has come round once more with brighter prospects for the coming year.

The Auckland Racing Club has never had such an attractive programme of events in its history as the one that comes up for delectation starting next week. The Auckland Trotting Club, too, has put forth its best to date. The owners from afar, and all provincial owners, have responded in both departments, and it would seem certain that there will be with us during the seven days that enthusiasts are worshipping at the shrine of St. Hippo, the best all-round class of horses that have ever been collected in the vicinities of the convincing grounds at Ellerslie and Alexandra Park. Never were both those resorts of sport lovers so nearly up to date to provide for the requirements of the people. We have assurances that when funds will permit the patrons of the sport who have been long suffering will have no complaints



DEATH OF A POPULAR NEW ZEALAND OFFICER.—The late LIEUT.-COLONEL CONRAD G. SAXBY (D.S.O.), of Napier, H.B., who served in South Africa and throughout the great European War with distinction. His death in London from influenza and pneumonia has been announced by cable.

are plenty of country meetings in the more settled and more accessible districts, and as they come along it is expected that facilities for getting to them will be improved upon the experiences of last year. The outlook is good in that respect.

With race meetings near at hand we are most concerned at present. There are a few to be wiped off the calendar, starting on Boxing Day and running into the New Year. Most roads lead to Auckland at this time of year because of the greater attractions offered for the holiday-maker, but we are not contemplating seeing quite so many visitors as we had been looking forward to. The ranks of the regulars have been reduced by deaths, and there are many who will cut out of their ordinary programmes, some through necessity, the meetings attending which has afforded them much pleasure in the past. There will be many taking their pleasures sadly enough, while many are rejoicing at the return of peaceful times. For very many who have those dear

to offer at all. The Ellerslie course and grounds look lovely and the floral displays are a sight to behold. The convalescents who are leaving the buildings this week have been delighted. Some of them, particularly the children, will in years to come, recall their enforced incarceration within the beautiful racecourse enclosures with feelings of pleasurable recollection. It is a domain once seen never to be forgotten. When the flags are flying and the floral decorations are displayed on Boxing Day, always allowing that the weather is good, there is no finer sight to be obtained anywhere in the colonies. We refer to racecourse scenes. The meeting should be begun under the most favourable auspices for its success all through, and the same may be said of that of our trotting-horse friends.

The Manawatu Racing Club's summer meeting comes second in importance in the North Island to that of the Auckland Racing Club. Capital acceptances and the promise of some assistance from the Railway Depart-

ment will make the meeting attractive to patrons of the sport who journey there. Awapuni is a nice convenient locale for the conduct of racing, a healthy one with a fine outlook. With plenty of breathing space and no lack of room to accommodate those who arrive there on wheels—so many motoring—it will be some years before congestion takes place. A useful all-round lot of horses are to compete there on Boxing Day and the day following. Afterwards the horses will go in different directions, some to race in Hawke's Bay and at Marton, an odd one or two perhaps to run at Ellerslie in the New Year, or at Stratford. The three last-mentioned meetings are run on up-to-date courses, the Hawke's Bay and Stratford ones in particular being amongst the beauty spots of racing.

The Taranaki Jockey Club's summer meeting is one of the Boxing Day gatherings in the North Island which is very popular, too, and commanding as it does a fine view of the sea the club's picturesque and conveniently-situated property could not be excelled as a healthy racing resort. It is hard to imagine such being closed in the interests of the health of communities. No wonder the attractions of racing with such conveniences are becoming greater. Most of the horses that race at the Taranaki meeting race also at Stratford, and possibly several may be at the concluding days of the Auckland R.C. summer meeting. That will depend upon circumstances. We are sure of some Taranaki visitors.

There will be racing and trotting in different parts of the South Island during the last week in 1918 and the first few days in 1919, and when those held North and South are disposed of a big slice will have been cut out of the Calendar, which is usually half-way through when the Boxing Day and New Year gatherings have been decided. This year it is not so. Auckland has most of its racing for 1918-19 to come, and there are other provinces in the same position. We can wish our readers all the enjoyment they can possibly obtain through following the sport they love so well and which they have individually and collectively helped to bring to its present prosperous condition. While regretting the sad experiences of many through their losses due to the war, and to accidents and to sickness and the ravages of serious epidemics, and in extending our sympathy to the bereaved, we can express the wish that Christmas and the New Year will bring comfort and sunshine and be the precursors of more joyous and better years in future.

Though the dispersal of famous studs often calls forth expressions of regret from those who love to wander round the pastures in which the mares and their progeny are domiciled, and we have had clearances of a fairly large number from the glorious little nursery grounds with which we have during a long residence in the Dominion become familiar, these sales are inevitable and must periodically occur. It is convenient for breeders and buyers to know where to obtain the blood they fancy, but dispersal sales do a lot of good in disseminating the fresh strains over widespread areas, and are of especial value to those studmasters who wish to make additions to their studs and others who may be desirous of starting out as breeders. Sires go to meet with other consorts, and the mares are purchased very often specially to mate with other sires calculated to suit them. For some time past it has been known that the Elderslie Stud of Mr. J. B. Reid would come under the hammer, as that well-known breeder finds that his health will not permit of him giving it the necessary attention. The stud of mares is an extensive one, running out to fifty, and comprising as it does well-selected English, Australian and New Zealand mares, thirty of them in foal to imported Kilbroney and twenty to imported Sunny Lake, both to be sold, also imported Markhope. At the same time fifty yearlings and foals by Kilbroney, Sunny Lake and Winkle will be disposed of.