



H. Gray, the most successful jockey at the Hamilton meeting and the leading horseman in New Zealand this season, it must be allowed is a very capable man in the saddle. He has had a great run remembering that a number of meetings were not run off at their due dates, and that he has had to do a good deal of running about the North Island and has also visited the South. Judgment counts for a good deal no doubt in being able to sort out the good mounts, and, on top of all, being able to secure them. A successful horseman is much sought after, too, and he is not obliged to accept the first mount that is offered. No horsemen are more closely watched than those who are prominent in their profession, and Gray's every act seems to be noticed and commented upon. He was fined at Wanganui at the last meeting, after three cautions previously, for alleged careless riding, and at the Hamilton Racing Club's meeting, after riding and winning by a narrow margin on Pretty Bobby, when something went wrong he was promptly hailed by the stipendiary steward, Mr. A. W. Gordon, and cautioned again—not for unfair riding, but for using inferior gear. We hold no brief for Gray or any other rider, but we assume that the breaking of a stirrup leather or some part of the gear horsemen use cannot be avoided sometimes. We have seen new gear the first time used give way, and had our attention drawn to that sort of thing on several occasions. We have seen a stirrup leather from the well-known firm of Boyce and Rogers' establishment in England give way, and steel stirrups go, and several times have seen bits break. For their own safety horsemen are as a general rule very careful of their gear. Those who provide their own owe it to those they ride for to exercise every care. They have the public to think of as well. So very rarely have we heard of horsemen being punished or reprimanded for using defective gear that Gray's case must be one of the few reported. He gets no more riding than some others in the same profession. If he had received a fall through the parting of his gear most people on the course would have been sympathising with him for his bad luck and their own, as he was on the favourite.

It shows what a lot of confidence backers have in Gray's riding when so many of his mounts are sent out favourites or heavily backed. It is a good horse that jumps often and never makes a mistake, and even the most accomplished horseman must occasionally have a bit of bad as well as good luck. We once heard a very capable horseman say that some of the most promising of the boys riding had been sent "ratty"—to use his expression—through being so often challenged and questioned about their riding by their employers or by trainers to whom they were apprenticed. Some of the lads really do need a bit of kindly advice from those with whom they are employed on matters concerning their riding, and attention to their gear, and we have no doubt some of the trainers would be very pleased indeed to give it when any suggestions were made from a right source. Some apprentices feel it very keenly when they see their names in the papers for doing things which they have found themselves incapable of avoiding. Gray while serving his apprenticeship had a better run than most of them. It is since he became a pastmaster in his profession that he has come in for the hard knocks. After the Hamilton meeting one of his many admirers remarked that he was quite expecting him to be cautioned for winning so many races. He got away with five, and it really did look as if he stole at least a brace of them. He had three seconds. His mounts would show a profit on the meeting.

The Hamilton Racing Club did not have a two days' meeting last year in consequence of the restrictions placed upon clubs throughout the Dominion, therefore we have to go back two years in order to make comparisons between the meeting concluded last week and the last previous two-day one of the club. As an all-round meeting it was a great success. From a club point of view the money derived from the totalisator and for admission and sale of race-cards and privileges would far exceed previous results. The fields, however, were not so large on either day as they were in February, 1917, and leaving out Spanner and Bo-Peep, who were the best of their age and respective sexes seen at any meeting at Claudelands, horse for horse the horses that ran at the earlier meeting would compare favourably; indeed, Bedford, who then won the Hamilton Cup with 8.4, and Lady Penury, who finished second with 9.0, only a head away, in the same time as Rude won this year, would have improved the field if they could have been produced as fit and well at their weights for this year's race. The object in penning this note

The Hamilton Club can be heartily congratulated upon their all-round achievement, which is in keeping with the progress of the Waikato. It was there that the idea originated of importing thoroughbred sires through the co-operation of the country clubs, whose successes with their racing ventures show beyond all doubt that sport is a strong trait amongst the settlers in every part of the province, and the Auckland province is not singular.

The judicial stewards and committee of the Hamilton Racing Club had before them on Monday of last week what must have been one of the most unpleasant cases it has been their lot to deal with. An enquiry was commenced at the instigation of Mr. A. W. Gordon, stipendiary steward, into the very contradictory form of Mr. Ewen W. Alison's (jun.) hurdle gelding Thrace, who after running last but one on the Saturday in the hurdle race over a mile and a-half and eighty-five yards, and never being at all prominent, came out on the Monday and won in the same company over a mile and three-quarters

picion, and it is an open secret that his rider, S. Henderson, though not called before the stewards to explain the horse's running on the first day, which in our opinion would have been a proper course to take, was spoken to by Mr. Gordon before he went out on the second day, when the horse ran quite a different race.

The lapse of forty-eight hours and even a slight difference in weight has often made a surprising difference in results before to-day, and history repeated itself at Hamilton in Thrace's case. It was then that the judicial stewards got to work, and they started an enquiry right away and finished it late the same night. The outcome of the enquiry was a disqualification of a sensational character—not of the rider or the trainer, but of the owner. We have taken the stand always that inconsistent running in itself is not sufficient to bring about disqualification. Sometimes the circumstances are such as to indicate that the inconsistency is in the nature or character of the horse, when there has been no connivance on the part of rider,



PRESENTATION BY THE HON. W. H. HERRIES OF THE VALUABLE CUP TO MR. R. DAVIS, OWNER OF THE ROTORUA CUP WINNER, LADY ENERGY, AT THE ROTORUA J.C.'S ANNUAL MEETING.

is to prevent people from running away with the erroneous idea that the horses taken all round were much better. The very large increase in the totalisator turnover, from £46,837 10s. to £83,309, represents an increase of £36,471 10s. in two years. No two-day meeting that we know of has been able to show in proportion to investments such corresponding results, though there have been some very noticeable increases. Wanganui, for instance, an old-established club, put £21,207 more through. Some clubs holding one-day meetings show even a better percentage. When these large increases are noticed it is fairly safe to conclude that there is plenty of money about, for one thing, that facilities for handling it are better, and that more people find their way to the racecourses to enjoy themselves. This is to be expected with an ever-increasing population and the return of our soldiers from the war zone, and the ever-increasing facilities for getting to and from meetings. Two years ago the Hamilton meeting was run on successive days. This year a Sunday intervened,

and 50 yards, or thirty-five yards short of a quarter of a mile further. In each race Tenacious was second, the first time to Glutterreno, who went up 15lb. in weight to his 6lb., Thrace being dropped 1lb. Thus Mr. McManemin penalised Glutterreno 9lb. for his length and a-half win over Tenacious on the first day, while Thrace, whose running could not be estimated in lbs., was dropped 1lb., and was meeting one 16lb. and the other 7lb. better. He was so far back that had it been his form a stone off would have been little enough. Thrace has more than once shown himself an improved horse at the second time of asking than on the first. He has, however, won at a one-day meeting and won twice on end at a two-day meeting, and this season has won two races at Takapuna, one on the second day after being second on the first day, and one at Hamilton after being second to last on the first day. These are his last six races—four wins, a second, and a second to last. His running in the first race at Hamilton after previous good form was viewed with surprise and some sus-

trainer or owner to bring it about. Sometimes there are legitimate reasons for the most pronounced cases of inconsistency, and it behoves those who sit in judgment over others to exercise the greatest care in investigating such cases. It is not natural to those who are placed in responsible positions as judicial stewards to go out of their way to punish anyone unless they consider punishment is the only course open to them, and then it becomes a duty they cannot shirk. There were suspicions about the running of Thrace on the first day, made stronger when he won on the second, and the stewards would have been wanting in their duty to the public and other owners if they had not held an enquiry. It was not until the evidence touching on the betting was gone into that a final decision was arrived at. It is against that decision, which carried with it disqualification for 12 months, that the owner of Thrace, Mr. Ewen W. Alison, jun., has announced his intention of appealing to the Auckland District Committee.