

THE :: PASSING :: SHOW

TOPICS OF THE WEEK, BY A CAUSTIC CRITIC.

There is every reason why the Northern province should have a strong and well-organised branch of the Sports' Protection League, because Auckland is already the premier sporting centre in the Dominion, and perhaps the one in which the wowsers element has got its tentacles most widely spread. For these reasons it is most regrettable that our leading sportsmen did not at the very outset of the movement select a capable organiser, and strong representative committee.

However, as a result of the apathy of Auckland sportsmen the movement has been left practically to R. A. Armstrong to organise. We have no personal feeling against this admittedly energetic and doubtless well-meaning gentleman, but it is now frankly admitted on all sides that instead of popularising the Sports' Protection League in the north the district secretary has brought about a serious split in sporting circles, so that now the very few people who should be rallying to the call have adopted an attitude of disinterestedness which is in such striking contrast to the unity and strength of the wowsers army.

For the success of a movement such as the Sports' Protection League, it

did not advance the interests of the league by his idle advocacy of the reinstating of bookmakers and his long-winded and pedantic denunciation of the Gaming Bill of 1910. If he wished to cavil with the "young wowsers party" over the title they selected, why was he not more consistent himself? He presumes to declare himself the actual genius who started the Sports' Protection League, therefore, the word "Protection" should have been his clarion call. Why then try and resurrect the dead, and call for that which is gone? By his attitude Mr. Armstrong is endeavouring to influence public opinion along different channels to that laid down by the Board of Control of the N.Z. Sports' Protection League, who have definitely announced that it is entirely opposed to the licensing of bookmakers, or extending the totalisator beyond racecourses.

Mr. Armstrong, while decrying the wowsers, appears to be partial to their methods of attack. This again is entirely opposed to the attitude of the Board of Control, which has stated in very definite terms that the league was formed for defensive purposes: to endeavour to prevent interference with its members; to oppose legislation promoted against sport in all its branches; and to band together

We have found yet another description of a wowsers. This one comes from a London sporting paper:—

"A wowsers is a kind of missing link between a man and a woman. Being reputedly of the male sex, he possesses (or is supposed to possess) a limited number of the physical attributes of a man, and an unlimited number of the mental weaknesses of a woman. The latter are always more noticeable than the former. He is generally pale and thin, and invariably quite tame. As often as not he wears spectacles. More often than not he is one."

It was at a small race meeting on the West Coast, and the winner of the first selling event, a sad old crock, was put up for auction. The auctioneer tapped on the judge's box impressively and gazed round the ring.

"Now, gentlemen!" he began persuasively, "what shall we say? Will anyone bid me fifty guineas for this useful animal? Come now, who'll bid me fifty guineas?"

There was a long silence, until a portly butcher raised a raucous voice from the back.

"Will yer take a bid from me, gov'nor?" he queried.

What's in a name! Evidently the adjudicators in the competition to name MacMahon and Lodder's new picture theatre had been imbibing in Yankee cocktails when they selected "Down Town" as the name to be inflicted on the new place of amusement. Surely no one in their right mind could suggest such a name was in any sense of the word suitable for a picture show, or likely to meet with public approval. If such a name were adopted it is certain that use would soon change it to something more euphonious such as the Damned Town Theatre, or contracted to the "D.T.'s" That would never do now that the liquor question is so prominently before the public!

The proprietors of the new theatre, although they promptly sent their cheque for £5 5/ to the youth with the mental kink that suggested the incogitable name, have wisely decided not to label their up-to-date picture show "Down Town." We suggested Queen's Theatre, and Queen's Theatre it is to be. This name has at least the virtue of being appropriate, in that it is situate in the hub of Queen Street, which in turn is the principal thoroughfare of the Queen City of the South.



was necessary from the outset to select an organiser who had the confidence of the leaders of sport in all its branches; who was possessed of tact and discrimination; and who would not by his utterances and attitude act the "Ego." Still another drawback to the supremacy of Mr. Armstrong is the fact that popularity is not his long suit.

It may, of course, be his misfortune and not altogether his fault, that things he associates himself with do not thrive. Mr. Armstrong was the "disturbing element" that caused the breaking up of the Auckland Art Society; it was he who made the Auckland Citizens' League unpopular; and it was he who maimed several other organisations that were deserving of public support. It is characteristic of the man that he should have considered it prudent to "butt-in" at the meeting of a small assembly of ardent anti-gamblers and anti-liquor enthusiasts, admonish them for taking unto themselves the name of the Young New Zealand Party. Surely R. A. Armstrong did not think his interference, where he was not wanted, was discreet?

Again at the recent meeting of the Parnell branch of the Sports' Protection League the district secretary

the fair-minded men against the prejudiced, and the good fellows against the dullards.

We now make an earnest and urgent appeal to all true sportsmen and the public generally, who wish to foster clean sport, healthy recreation, and wholesome amusement, to rally to the banner of the Sports' Protection League, and make it a power in the land. The wowsers and kill-joys are mustered and their battalions, besides showing a solid front, are the keenest sharpshooters in the world. They will snipe and pot at every form of sport, and when a weakness is seen in the sportsmen's lines, they are sure to carry the position—even at the point of the bayonet—if the latter do not prepare to resist the attacks.

If Mr. Armstrong is an impediment to the successful organisation of a strong and representative force in Auckland he must be sacrificed. Let us act as they have acted in Wellington and Christchurch, and prevail on our leading sporting citizens to convene a meeting, set up an efficient and energetic committee of the best men obtainable to represent every branch of sport, and thereafter select by ballot an organising secretary from the most suitable candidates available.

"Certainly, certainly," replied the auctioneer; "only too pleased to."

"Then I'll bid yer good-day!"

Observe the friendly warning in the Press,

Directed to the jockeys in their pride,

That many folks have noticed with distress,

The bumps which somehow happen when they ride.

They're innocent and harmless little chaps,

It's nothing but their nervousness, of course;

But they should be more careful of mishaps,

Nor biff the boy who rides the other horse.

Yes, that's what happens when the jockeys climb

Their horses in the struggle for some Cup;

Their innocence and goodness is sublime,

And yet bumps happen when their blood is up.

Each jockey is a simple little lad,

His harmless heart we never ought to doubt;

We only warn him that it looks so bad

When nervously he starts to "deal it out."

Visitor from Sydney: "She seems very cold." "Yes," answered his friend, "she's an Auckland girl, but after you've given her a few burning kisses she begins to thaw off."

Happily for Aucklanders the Gay Gordons are coming this week to banish dull care and allow us to escape for a spell from the walls of the wowsers, and the prattle of politicians.

Surely Tommy Cotter's rise to the dignity of "silk" comes at a most opportune time. The latest K.C. must surely show his grateful appreciation of the Attorney General's patronage by working relentlessly for the return to Parliament of the Seatless Knight.

It isn't everyone who knows the exact moment to leave off.

From the agony columns of a southern exchange:—

Friendship: Anonymous communications must cease. Happily married. Two little sons. D.B.

We quite agree with the agricultural editor of the "N.Z. Times," that "the ideal potatoe has yet to be found." So has the ideal girl. Meanwhile, we have to go on mashing the best we can get.