

THE TOTALISATOR COMMISSION.

The members of the New South Wales Totalisator Commission left New Zealand on Monday for Tasmania after which they go on to Melbourne and Adelaide before returning to Sydney. Before leaving Dunedin the Hon. R. H. Levien, Chairman of the Commission, had something to say to an "Otago Daily Times" reporter in regard to the New Zealand tour.

In answer to a question, Mr. Levien stated that he thought that the race-courses the commission had visited in New Zealand showed beyond a doubt that the appointments were most convenient and complete in every way. Not only were the courses generally made attractive by the aid of the gardener, but the sanitary arrangements—a matter of essential importance on a racecourse—were very well carried out indeed, and in this respect he was glad to notice that in the exhaustive report which had been submitted to Parliament by the Racing Commission attention had been called where necessary to those courses on which these arrangements were lacking. All the courses which the commission had visited, however, were without a doubt up to date. The running tracks, both for racing and training, were everything that could be desired, the safety of the horses seeming to have been well assured. At the Wingatui course the members were highly pleased with what they saw, and expressed the opinion that the course would be a very picturesque one in another year or two, when the club would have completed its work.

Mr. Levien went on to refer to the conditions existing in New South Wales, where they had no totalisator, but only bookmakers, and stated that a mistake had been made by the Christchurch papers in publishing what he had said in regard to the amount paid by bookmakers in fees, etc. He desired it to be clearly understood that what he said was that bookmakers' licensing fees and entrance fees, clerks' registration fees and salaries and the bookmakers' living expenses ran into the total of £151,426 16/ per year. This applied only to Sydney and suburbs and Newcastle, and not to the whole of the State. He had noticed that the Hon. J. A. Millar, speaking on the gaming question in the House on July 21, 1910, said that the bookmakers paid £120,000 odd to the clubs in New Zealand for the privilege of being on the course alone. If that was what they paid in licenses alone, what must the other expenses attaching to the business total? "It appears to be a very profitable business taking it any way," concluded Mr. Levien.

Remarking on the fact that, of the 10 per cent. deducted from the money passing through the totalisator 7½ per cent. went to the club and 2½ per cent. to the State, Mr. Levien said that they had found from all the evidence so far placed before them that the clubs spent 7½ per cent upon improvements to the courses, on increasing the prize-money, and on general up-keep, and that the public were allowed to use the grounds on holiday occasions if they so desired. When the whole of the evidence was completed it would make interesting reading, both from the social standpoint and as regards betting and racing generally. The evidence and report would be useful, not only to New Zealand herself, but to the States of Victoria and New South Wales, where the totalisator was not in existence. Mr. Levien said that he wished it to be distinctly understood that neither he himself nor the other members of the commission—and he thought he could speak for them all—desired to express any opinion at the present juncture upon the question that has been laid before them for investigation. They must first furnish their Government with the evidence and their report, which would then be laid before Parliament. They could only hope that that report, whatever its nature, would meet with satisfaction from those who took an interest in the much-vexed question. Personally, he felt the importance of his position and the responsibility attaching to it, and the commission had taken care to grant every facility for the hearing of evidence. In addition, the public had never been prevented from attending to hear the evidence being taken, for the commission never sat in camera except at the special request of the person giving evidence.

During the past year, the Melbourne Trotting Club have provided in prize money the total amount of 4610 sovs., distributed over 21 meetings. This sum is a record for Australia, and marks the great progress trotting has made in Victoria under the management of the Melbourne Trotting Club (says an Australian exchange.) A number of innovations have been tried during the year by the M.T.C., in order to increase the popularity of the sport, and to endeavour to bring new blood into the racing game, and each experiment has been successful. In the first place sprint racing was given a trial, and close finishes have been the result. Ladies' Bracelet Handicaps have also come in for their fair share of support; but the Tradesmen's Trotting Handicaps have been the feature of the year, but they have been found to have had the effect of not only bringing a number of new horses and men into the racing, but have also improved the patronage at the gate.

Due attention has, however, been given to the faster classes, although we would have liked to see the big races handicapped on a shorter limit, (continues the paper in question), but, still, the recent policy of the club to put on a purse of 100 sovs. for fair class horses, over a distance of 1¼ miles, on every programme, should be the means of not only keeping fast horses in training to race for the prize money only, apart from the gambling element, but will also encourage owners to give a fair price for horses, to bring here from the adjoining States. I am a great believer in the purse-gated horse myself, and trust that the management of the club will recognise their duty to horse breeders by putting on at least one race for pure-gated horses only on each programme; let trotters and pacers race together, but bar the hoppers altogether.

Some months ago there was a controversy in Australia as to the respective merits of starting and handicapping by distance or time, the result being that after a trial meeting had been held on the Richmond Racecourse, to test the methods, it was decided by the management to adopt the distance handicap, with the standing start and at the last meeting of last year, the results were such as to justify the choice of the management, and, although experts may differ as to the wisdom or otherwise of the choice, still a decision in favour of the standing start has been given and all owners must loyally abide by the opinion of those in authority.

Coughing, as described by a German authority, causes trouble in the training stables of that country, and remedies are not easily found. Whilst the subject was being discussed an experienced trainer stated that, after trying all the American nostrums with out success, he arrived at the conclusion that the best remedy is absolute rest, fresh air, scrupulous cleanliness, and for the first four or seven days a rigid fasting cure. He has also noticed that any work given to a horse sickening with the fever causes a rise in temperature, and induces inflammation of the lungs; high-pressure feeding, resorted to formerly, he considers a mistake. Another pronouncement is to this effect: "Bad weather, cold winds, and rain have nothing to do with the spasmodic outbreaks of coughing. It is suggested that the German racing societies should offer a tempting reward to the clever chemist who finds a remedy."

STAKE-WINNERS AT TRENTHAM.

The Wellington Racing Club established a fresh record during the recent meeting at Trentham when the large sum of £83,317 was put through the totalisator for the three days. This is an advance on the last summer meeting of £52,004.

The principal winning owners to draw stakes from the Wellington Racing Club were as follows:—

"Mr. Highden"	£ 1325
Mr. W. Smart	725
Sir Geo. Clifford	695
Mr. E. J. Watt	595
Mr. J. Buckley	430
Mr. J. R. M'Donald	400
Mr. H. Whitney	280
Hon. J. D. Ormond	250

The total amount paid out in stakes by the W.R.C. amounted to £6350.

The Sout-Caller 'Ou colt disposed of at the Waikanae stud sale at Wellington on Wednesday for 250gns was secured by Mr. J. Jackson, of Auckland.

YANKEE "DOPES" FOR HORSES.

A German sporting paper has drawn up a list of all the "dopes" which have reached the Continent from America. It is stated that the dose given internally depends on the weight of the horse, and can by an expert be so carefully given as to defy detection. All the difficulties preventing an accurate analysis are, enumerated, and to obtain the slightest proof would necessitate the horse being watched without intermission for several days; gathering and examining the secretions, which, in the case of strychnine would not give any result except after several days. Cocaine and strychnine are the favourite drugs' but, as the writer of the article observes, the mere fact that certain alkaloids in small quantities are to be found in the bukal and dermal secretions, and the fact of their having increased the vigour of frogs and even killed them, is not positive proof that chemically-prepared food offered in the stables under different names with most of the greenstuffs trainers give

to their equine charges contain alkaloids, and high feeding with corn, and an indigent digestion on the part of the horses may be productive of poisonous alkaloids owing to the presence of Avenine. There is no difficulty in discovering these different alkaloids. A description is given of the manner in which the analyses made by Austrian and Russian chemists were made recently, and their veracity is impugned. Strychnine and cocaine are used in most of the chemical food preparations, and the latter is given medicinally. Fasting and bucal secretions even with human beings engender at times a violent poison, and then again the frog is not calculated for any experiment, for the frog is highly sensitive to sugar in any form, and sugar is present in nearly every kind of prepared food. The conclusion is that the analyses offer no real proof as to the culpability of a trainer who has been deprived of his license on suspicion.

During the Foxton meeting, C. Price rode four winners.

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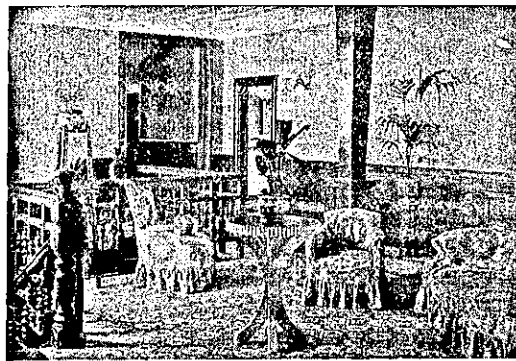
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