



The racing season of 1919-20 so far as the Auckland province is concerned is at an end, that is to say, so far as totalisator meetings go, for it has yet to be decided whether the Waikato meeting, for which the acceptances were received, will be brought off or abandoned. The meetings held in each part of the province have all been financially successful and in other respects as well. Bigger prize money has been distributed all round, there have been more horses racing, and the attendances, as might well have been anticipated from a growing population in the north and particularly in the province of Auckland, have been in keeping. More owners have been coming into the game and lending their support, and the patronage of the public has become much easier because of the increased road facilities in the shape of motor traffic supplementing that by rail and steamer. By rail and steamer there has been an increase in the number of people carried, and to the all-round improvement in transit and conveniences for accommodating visitors in the centres where meetings are held can be ascribed the added success. To keep pace with the times is necessary in all departments, and that is what all clubs are endeavouring to do in and around Auckland and in the country districts. Good prize money is the chief factor in their success. It brings the horses and the people to see them run.

The time between the meeting at Ellerslie last week, and the opening of the new season, over three and a-half months hence, at Avondale, is all too long. With clubs all wanting to secure the spring, summer, and autumn weather for their meetings we have really only one winter fixture in the province, and what a highly successful one it has proved year after year we all know. During the "off season" in the province, owners can send their horses away to the winter meetings elsewhere if they feel so disposed, and some do, but there is no good reason why there should not be a good winter meeting or two in the Auckland province, in addition to the Great Northern gathering of the Auckland Racing Club. Successful winter meetings were held at Takapuna at one time, in the month of May. They served their purpose well, but what we now want most is a meeting or two between the end of the first week in June and the first of the spring fixtures. The jumping horses and the races with 8.0 and 9.0 minimums are the kind that give opportunities for many horses to show their usefulness, and to give more riders a chance of earning their living. It is the season when the men who are found schooling jumpers and taking risks that most flat riders do not experience, get a show of earning money by riding on the flat as well, and we were not surprised to find the deputation that waited on the chairman of the Racing Conference in Wellington on behalf of the jockeys a fortnight ago advocating races which would give greater opportunities to riders increasing in weight.

Winter racing is popular in other parts of the New Zealand, and would be found equally so in the Auckland province, where it should be given greater encouragement. Auckland is such a large province and has so much larger a population than any of the other provinces that it is entitled to claim a further increase of permits. In a comparatively short time we shall find the Hamilton Racing Club with a new course, and no doubt provision will be found for a splendid steeplechase course within its large area, and as that club is sure to have a second meeting each year in the not far distant future, one of the gatherings could well be held during the winter season. The Waikato sportsmen would find plenty of horses for the jumping races, and they have already many flat racers in training in different parts of the district to make success assured. The Auckland meetings rely largely on their support. The introduction of English thoroughbred sires there has been having a marked effect, and has been giving a stimulus to breed-

ing and ownership. With more well-bred mares introduced amongst the settlers, many of whom are going in for breeding on a small scale, we shall continue to observe results favourable to the growth and development of the sport in all its branches. Winter racing will give the not too finely bred horses opportunities over obstacles, and we hope that as permits to race are increased it will only be on the understanding that some of the clubs will have to cater for the sport at a season which so many executives try to avoid, not in the interests of sport, but in the interests of business of people associated with the clubs. Meetings held in country districts as in the city and suburban areas only need to be started a little earlier in the day, as were the races at Ellerslie at the recent meeting, to become more popular. People can usually get to the meetings in good time, but it is the getting home that is very often the trouble. The interests of the greatest number should be studied, not of the few.

Racing Club for the season have been large, and the money to pay for improvements, which was only in sight when the season began, must be now in hand. The more money received in totalisator revenue the sooner the work will be done, and the sooner the club will be able to pay off liabilities for the additional properties acquired. While seasons like the past last it should not take long in bringing the Auckland racecourse property right up to the requirements of the people who patronise the racing thereon. During the recent meeting the outside public could notice that the foundations were in for the large stand being erected on their domain, and predictions are offered that by the time another winter meeting rolls round the stand will be sufficiently forward for it to be used.

The most engrossing topic of the week has been the stoppage by the representatives of the seamen and watersiders combined of some horsemen, trainers, and more horses from

whom Sir George Clifford was unfortunately one, met at Wellington. We use the word "unfortunately" because having refused to meet the representatives of the association in his capacity as head of the Conference it was hard to see how he could meet them as an owner. At first it was expected that the Hon. E. W. Alison would be one of the owners, but as that gentleman could not be in attendance on the day selected the name of Mr. William Duncan, of Wanganui, was substituted, with that of Mr. R. Hannon, of Cambridge. Then it was learned that Mr. Duncan could not act, and Mr. J. S. McLeod, of Hawke's Bay, filled the third position. Speaking as the representative of the owners of New Zealand, Sir George Clifford accepted the responsibility of saying that they could not recognise the association, and the business for which the representatives thereof and the owners were assembled came to an abrupt termination. The meeting, be it remembered, was arranged by the Premier of this country, and Mr. Hally, Conciliation Commissioner, it is said, will endeavour to bring the parties together again. Could anything appear more utterly absurd than the existing position of affairs?

One of the grounds taken up for not recognising the Association of Jockeys is that it is not representative, so many former members having withdrawn. Sir George Clifford claims that ninety had done so, but Mr. Sheath, secretary to the association, on the other hand, says that he has not received the resignations of anything like so large a number, and has stated officially that many of those who have resigned have done so under compulsion from owners. The fact is that some owners do not hold with the jockeys having an association at all, but there are others who think they have as much right as any other section of the community to organise for their own benefit, and there are many owners who think so, too. The procedure on the part of the executive of the association has been very much at variance with the ideas of those who looked upon the association when first launched as likely to do good, and the whole of the members were not in accord with all that was done by the representative heads. It would have been a wise course if they had held meetings and endeavoured to shape their business on lines that would have been more generally acceptable, instead of being influenced to withdraw from membership. Those who have withdrawn, as already stated, have been promised by the president of the Racing Conference that he will support certain claims for higher fees and use his influence to see suggestions laid before him carried at the Conference next month. This rests with the members of the Conference. In the meantime the association is not recognised by either the Racing Conference or the horse owners, and as a result the embargo placed on the carriage of horses by the seamen, who are supported now by the waterside workers, is still on, and racehorses in both islands of New Zealand which have engagements in Australia are held up, so are thoroughbreds intended for breeding purposes—indeed, a stud of brood mares in the South Island destined to be located in the Waikato, some thoroughbreds from Australia and others that were to be sent there cannot be transported, and there are horses in the South Island that raced at the Royal meeting that still remain there. How it will all end is hard to say, but much inconvenience and considerable loss has already been suffered by those who own racing and breeding stock. The shipping companies seem to be in the hands of the seamen and waterside workers now. Some forty horses it is known have been refused transit, and with meetings coming on in both the North and South Islands the outlook is not pleasing to contemplate.



PRINCE ALBERT UNVEILS WAR MEMORIAL AND PRESENTS KING'S COLOURS TO THE 20TH BATTALION LONDON REGIMENT AT BLACKHEATH. The illustration shows Prince Albert presenting the King's Colours to the 20th Battalion.

The publication of the totalisator figures for the past racing season, that is so far as the Auckland Racing Club is concerned, make interesting reading. The grand total for the past season is the highest ever reached by that club. It has to be remembered that there were three extra days' racing, including the Royal meeting and 24 additional events upon which the totalisator was in operation. The investments last season, which was "flu" year, fell short at the summer and spring meetings, which were held at the same time of what might have been expected, and the average in round numbers per race was £3906. This year it has been £11,313, or an increase of over £1400 per race, not such a very large one when we come to think of the increased attendances and improved facilities for handling the investments. The figures look big, but per head of the attendances they are smaller in proportion than the investments at some other meetings in the Dominion. This will be found to be the case when the figures are compiled. The profits of the Auckland

travelling by sea, as the outcome of the trouble with the New Zealand Jockeys' Association and the Avondale Jockey Club in the first instance, the Auckland District Committee's decision to suspend the licenses of certain horsemen in the second instance, and of the refusal of Sir George Clifford, as head of the Racing Conference, to recognise the Jockeys' Association and of his appeal to the respective clubs forming the Racing Conference to do the same until after the position had been dealt with at the approaching Conference, He, however, did meet the representatives of a section of the resigned members of the association, and believing them to represent the best interests of the jockeys as a whole has made promises to support claims which emanated from them when the Conference meets. In the main these claims are what the association "demanded" while the jockeys who have since resigned were members of it. A culminating point was reached on Thursday when three representatives of the Jockeys' Association and three representatives of the owners, of