

When Webb Won World Title.

parts of the Dominion converged on the Wanganui.

After two months of consistently brilliant weather the day was heralded by a steady drizzle. Supporters of both contestants strayed up and down the streets of Wanganui debating as to whether a postponement would be necessary. Rain continued until an hour before the race and thousands who had travelled to Wanganui did not brave the elements. Nevertheless, a large attendance thronged the banks along the 10-mile course.

Tressider held up the contest by arriving 15 minutes late. There was an air of expectancy and intense excitement as the two men manoeuvred at the starting point. For the first 200 yards and at a hot pace the contestants remained on equal terms.

pace, the title did not change hands. The honours on the day went to Arnst who, at the peak of his career, was regarded as one of the greatest of all world champions.

Actually this was Webb's final race for the title, but several years later he was induced to come out of retirement to meet Paddy Hannan in a contest for the New Zealand title then held by Webb. The ex-world champion regained his best form and Hannan, on the day, could not make a race of it. He was outclassed and lost by a margin of 15 lengths.

Although never in the same class as Arnst or Webb, Hannan was, nevertheless, a versatile oarsman. Webb was in such great fettle about this time that his supporters in Wanganui would have been willing to back him in



To the delight of his friends, Webb soon took the lead. After the first mile had been covered, Webb had a length up his sleeve and from that point onwards the race was in safe keeping, the eventual margin of victory being three lengths.

Webb could have increased his advantage had he been pressed to do so. As the champion neared the winning post the crowds went wild with delight. A rousing haka given by a party of Maoris provided additional colour to a remarkable demonstration.

Another New Zealander, in the person of R. Arnst, came into the limelight and lifted the world title from the Wanganui champion, who was not on top form. A burn on his left arm some five weeks' previously had caused a relaxation in training.

A few months later Webb challenged again and, although he was rowing beautifully and the contest was fought out at a terrific

another world title contest had it been possible for Barry, who had annexed the championship from Arnst, to make the trip to New Zealand. However, Barry did not make the trip and Webb once more retired, this time permanently as far as racing was concerned.

Throughout the intervening years Webb has always retained a lively and personal interest in the sport at which he had excelled so well and brought so much fame to the Dominion. As a coach he has accomplished valuable work and visiting oarsmen to Wanganui have found that he has retained quite a deal of his old brilliance over sprint distances when rowing in practice runs.

A grand sport, a wonderful sculler in his day, a fine type of citizen and a credit to rowing, William Webb today still enjoys good health and the respect of fellow townsmen and friends throughout the Dominion.