



HEADS bowed toward the radio. Devotees — Kiwis — spellbound by *The Voice*. Its another *Thompson Handicap*. Clusters of listeners in town and country outnumber the *Trentham* throng by twenty to one—and *Trentham* is packed to the pickets. It is wartime racing.

We'll wait for the judge's placing. Yes. *Flying Ace* wins Time 1-38, a race record. . . . It's over for another year. The next meeting, the next interest. The next collect, the next hope. The last collect, the latest success story. The *mights* and the *ifs* provide scant cover and consolation for the shirtless.

Kiwis overseas have not lost the art of *nattering* in the racing vernacular. Many last memories of New Zealand include a day at *Trentham* recourse trying to find out whether one of its principal buildings has a back as well as a front; or is it really more blessed to give than to receive! One Kiwi after another flashes on to a verbal screen his mental pictures of his racing fun. Hero or villain, the horse thunders round the track again to stop, to a walk, or to come from the back like a train, or to fight it out stride for stride past the judge. The conversation dies. It's another Kiwi memory.

The silence surged softly backward.

And the galloping hoofs were gone.

So much for memories; what is the present picture?

Horses do not require food ration books but that is one of the few com-



plications that war conditions have not brought to owners and trainers. The greatest complication has been the much curtailed transport facilities.

The Railway Dept. has stopped the carriage of horses by rail. No racehorse may travel more than 30 miles by horse float. What happens? Horses walk. Some of them have walked hundreds of miles by stages, won races, and walked home again. Some of them simply walked hundreds of miles with good intentions. It all kept the sport going. The Auckland province, as usual, provided a novelty angle—inland water transport. To support the Waikato meetings horses were walked to Mercer and there embarked on paddle steamers, barges, etc. working the Waikato River.

Undoubtedly this provided the followers of the sport with new bases for assumptions. *Obviously no owner would walk and ferry a horse scores of miles unless it was a sitter?*

The assumption, translated into financial speculation, gets out of hand, however, when most of the field has walked! Then, inevitably, the age-old calculations re-appear ranging from pin stabbing, to *the dinkum oil*, from those living closest to horses' mouths.

Racing in New Zealand in wartime has brought a flood of new records. There have been fewer meetings. Last season there were half the number of permits issued for meetings as compared with a normal season. Clubs can now race on Saturdays and public holidays only. Crowds at the meetings held have established new *highs*, but the Railway Dept. no longer runs special trains.