

policemen, and taxidrivers. There were Americans, Maoris, Chinese, and South-Islanders. On a white hunter and wearing a red coat was the clerk of the course. There were thirty barmen, and as many barrels, thousands of glasses. There were cooks and waitresses, course stewards and officials; men to operate and supervise the totalizator; honorary surgeons and veterinary surgeons; a judge, a starter, a handicapper, a clerk of scales, a timekeeper. And thousands of others.

Also present were a hundred or more horses.

At the barber's shop in that country town earlier in the morning the barber left me with lather on my face to answer his telephone. He finished the shaving, patched up a cut, and whispered in my ear that "things" were happening in the first race; S— was the oil; one of the bets to be put through the tote was of £800. It was a hurdle race. This mare had shown no form for two seasons; in a dozen or more starts she had finished without a place. A strange sort of business, we thought, but maybe he was as good a tipster as he was a barber. We bought a green ticket for a place, a blue one for a win. The mare won by a length and a half. We, too, were able to sleep that night with a roof over our heads.

The day passed with rain, with umbrellas in the stand, outside the tote, in the entrance of the marquee where pies, sandwiches, and cakes with icing were sold inside with slopping cups of tea. From fifteen minutes before noon, the time of the first race, the day passed with excitement, the scramble for betting, the tenseness of the starts, the driving fight of the race, the yelling of the crowd swelling into a roaring fury that was the finish—a stamp of approval for the winners that were favourites, the



opposite for those that were not. Everywhere the crowd, people jammed and sweating and shoving; and in the enclosure the horses and jockeys with coloured silk shirts that filled in the wind so that these little men were balloons of coloured shirt; they seemed to have no legs, no arms, no head.

We talked to some of the jockeys. One was managing to roll a cigarette and at the same time hold four thoroughbreds, their noses almost touching. He didn't mind telling us he weighed little more than 5 st. Another, an apprentice, was 4 st. 7½ lb., and he didn't see why he should have to pay a penny each time he wanted to weigh himself when it cost his brother, who was 14 st., the same amount. They are not all as light as that; but, except for hurdle and steeplechase riding, they can't be too much more than 7 st. Any increase after that has to be watched. For many jockeys weight is a constant worry; to keep it down means a diet, small helpings and without plates held out for more, plenty of exercise, and, if necessary, the sweatbox. "Yes," chipped in one old trainer, "and the main thing about diet is to say 'No thank you,' but most of my boys say, 'No thank you, I'll have something light'—and think it's fine if they just stick to cream-puffs."

Boys wishing to be jockeys are put on probation with a trainer for six months, and if after that their service, conduct, and progress has been satisfactory they are apprenticed for another six months, at the end of which, with the approval of the New Zealand Racing Conference, they are granted apprentices' licenses.

