

and England. As early as 1843 the Hon. Henry Petre imported to Wellington from England two stallions which exercised a lasting influence on thoroughbred breeding in the colony. To a great degree races in those days were important social events and, on the sporting side, were notable from the fact that owners very often rode their own horses. Amongst others who did so was Sir William Stafford, one of our early Premiers. Racing excited equally great interest among the Maoris.

141. In a surprisingly short time such progress had been made in the breeding of horses in New Zealand that invasions of Australia became profitable ventures. The standing of the men who first popularized racing in New Zealand has had an abiding influence on the control of the sport and on its development from its beginnings over a hundred years ago and down to the present time. The clubs which grew up throughout the colony were, and fortunately still are, composed of responsible men with the interests of racing as a sport at heart. Each club, in earlier years, adopted independently such rules as it wished. These rules varied, but all had a common basis in the principles of the rules of racing in England.

142. The first move towards the national control of racing was made in 1886. In July of that year representatives of the Canterbury and Dunedin Jockey Clubs met to consider the rules of racing. The minutes of that meeting have been lost. In 1887 delegates from Auckland, Canterbury, Dunedin, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, Wanganui, and Wellington metropolitan clubs met at Napier. The minutes of this meeting are also missing, but a record of it and of its primary purpose is afforded by a letter addressed by the chairman of the committee, Sir George McLean, to the then Colonial Secretary. The letter discloses that the purpose of the meeting was to advance the interests of racing as a whole and to encourage the growth of the breeding industry by means of the totalizator, the merits of which were recommended at some length in the letter.

143. From that stage onwards meetings of the representatives of the metropolitan clubs were held almost every year and sometimes twice a year. At a meeting held on the 30th July, 1891, it was resolved that a body, denominated the New Zealand Jockey Club, should come into existence on the 1st January, 1892. The committee, consisting of Messrs. Bell, Clifford, McLean, Mitchelson, and Captain Russell, were appointed to prepare drafts of the constitution and rules. The resolution did not become completely operative for some two or three years, but it is the body which was constituted pursuant to it which became the New Zealand Racing Conference, although no formal resolution adopting the title appears ever to have been passed. By 1900 the control of racing throughout New Zealand by the New Zealand Racing Conference became firmly established.