

RAKAIA RACING CLUB.

The headquarters of the club are at Rakaia. The club was formed twenty years ago, and is not registered. For the last five years we have been affiliated to the Canterbury Jockey Club and New Zealand Trotting Association. The last meeting was held in December, 1913. A list of the present members of the club and a copy of the club's last balance-sheet have been forwarded. The course is situate on the Rakaia Public Domain, and is 6 furlongs in circumference. It is leased annually by application to the Domain Board. The accommodation consists of natural grandstand, horse-paddocks, secretary's office, judge's box, and jockeys' room. The course is fenced for a quarter of a mile in the inside and the outside of the straight. The nearest club using the totalizator is at Ashburton, eighteen miles distant. The nearest club not using the totalizator is at Methven, twenty-two miles distant. Owing to Rakaia being the most central town in the Selwyn Electorate, situated on the main line, and requiring no special train arrangements in connection with the holding of our races, we should here like to point out that our present train arrangements are suitable for conveying patrons of the sport from almost every point in the electorate. In fact, we venture to say that no other country club in the district can claim having such a central position without having to make special train arrangements. Our meetings in the past have always been successful by way of arrangement and attendance. We have in the past always offered good prize-money, and good nominations have been the result; and we have also a large membership. In our district we have many prominent horse-breeders, and we are of opinion that if the racing club was fully established in our midst it would tend greatly to improve the stock.

By the Deputation.—We first started racing here in 1868, and the then racing club served the district between the Rakaia and Rangitata Rivers. Most of the members of the deputation are farmers and horse-breeders and men who take a keen interest in the sport of racing. The meetings of the present club have been held on the Domain Reserve with very great success. On a bad day we get an attendance of fourteen hundred, and on a good day upwards of two thousand. We pay nothing for the use of the course. We are only asked to keep the course and grounds in good order. The racing club is now in a good financial position. We can provide good sport for the people of Mount Somers, Methven, Hororata, and round about, and they can return home on the same day. If we get a permit we are prepared to raise our stakes to £500 if necessary, and to do anything that is required in the way of improvements on the course. Our stewards are composed of farmers of standing and influence in the district. We are thirty-six miles from Christchurch and eighteen from Ashburton and Hororata; but while the people in these places can get to us and get back to their homes the same day, we cannot do the same in all cases. We think we can say that our meetings have always been well conducted.

METHVEN RACING CLUB.

The headquarters of the club are at Methven. The club was formed in 1881, thirty-three years ago, and from that period until the present day, with one exception, we have never missed holding a meeting. The races have always been properly managed and carried out, there never having been trouble of any kind; and in proof of this statement I beg to refer you to the Canterbury Jockey Club and New Zealand Trotting Association, with which bodies we are registered. The last meeting was held in January, 1914. A list of the present members of the club and a copy of the club's last balance-sheet have been forwarded. Our course is situated on the Mount Harding Estate, one mile from Methven, and was properly surveyed by Messrs. Freeman and Son, licensed surveyors, Christchurch. The circumference of the course is 8 furlongs. The Mount Harding Estate being entailed, the course cannot be purchased. Our tenure, therefore, is as follows: That as long as Mr. S. G. Holmes owns the Mount Harding Estate our club is to have the course. If this tenure is not deemed sufficient by you we undertake to purchase a freehold course; and we have a letter from Mr. Hugh McNeill giving us option over 86 acres of land for a freehold course, half a mile from Methven, which is even better situated than our present one. The purchase-money is to be raised by the issue of debentures: all the members asked so far have agreed to take up £10 or over. In the case of our patron, he immediately offered to take up £100. The course is fenced on both sides of the straight. The nearest clubs using the totalizator are at Christchurch, fifty-eight miles distant, Ashburton, twenty-two miles, and Hororata, twenty-nine miles distant. The nearest clubs not using the totalizator are Mount Somers, twenty miles; Springburn and Alford Forest, fifteen miles; Rakaia, twenty-three miles; and Springfield, fifty-four miles distant. We are enclosing rough diagram of the position of Methven in relation to these clubs, and if you consult a map of Canterbury you will find that Methven is situated nearly in the centre of all the above-mentioned clubs. A point worthy of mention is this: that of late years the meetings of Alford Forest and Springburn Clubs have been held on our course. We consider our club has a special claim for consideration inasmuch as there is no district in Canterbury that has made such rapid advancement in recent years as Methven. The purchase by the Government for closer settlement of the Highbank and Marawiti Estates, and the cutting-up of the Springfield, Viewmount, Waimarama, and Mount Hutt Estates have been the means of improving the district beyond recognition, making it one of the most prosperous in Canterbury. Ample verification of this statement will be found in the railway returns for the Methven Branch. To illustrate the prosperity and progressiveness of the district we would draw your attention to the Methven Agricultural and Pastoral Association, which was inaugurated three years ago. At the end of September, 1914, their balance-sheet showed a credit balance of nearly £500, with a membership of approximately three hundred, and the entries at the last show numbered 1,350, a number not approached by any other country agricultural and pastoral association. The telephone bureau opened here a few years ago now has eighty-two