

new course built just on the county boundary, and we think the site will make an ideal sports-ground as well as a racecourse. We are in a very isolated position. We are fifty miles from any other racing centre, and we consider this is one of the most important centres in New Zealand. We are a great sporting community, and we do not see why we should be deprived of the privilege of a sport in which we delight. We have a population of some twelve thousand people, who, if they want a day's sport, have to go to Reefton, Greymouth, or Hokitika. The hack meetings we held after our permit was taken away resulted in a dead loss, but we carried on until we came to the end of our resources. If we had a permit here we could co-operate with the other sports bodies and provide a good sports-ground, which Westport at present entirely lacks. At present we are the missing racing link in the chain between Blenheim and Hokitika. We are not producers from an agricultural or pastoral point of view. Our only asset is coal, which is a national asset, and the people who are producing this coal at present have no means whatever of amusing themselves and making their lives happier. We want a permit in order to provide them with some amusement and sport within a reasonable distance of their own homes. Our trotting club, which was formed only a few years ago, is now in a flourishing condition, with a property right in the heart of the borough, and we can see no reason why our jockey club, with the assistance of a permit, should not be as great a success. Our proposed course is a much more suitable site than the old ground, and that is another reason why we think the club will prosper. In view of the fact that the rest of the Coast has fifteen permits, we certainly think that Westport is entitled to one. In fact, under present conditions, it is as cheap to attend a race meeting at Wellington as a meeting at any other part of the Coast.

The Chairman: Are we to understand that the two gentlemen who waited on us two days ago, and who were appointed by the club to wait on the Commissioners and support the application, came deliberately before us and said they were authorized to withdraw the application?

Mr. J. H. Powell (one of the deputation): Yes; they were appointed to obtain a permit for the club, and they had no instructions from the Westport Jockey Club to withdraw the application.

The Chairman: Will it be possible for us to get an opportunity of examining the minute-book in order to see how far they were authorized to act as delegates of the Westport Jockey Club?

Mr. J. H. Powell: We have sent for Mr. Slee, the secretary of the club.

Mr. Slee: The delegates who first waited on the Commission were appointed by the jockey club to do so at a meeting of the club held at 7.30 p.m. on the 4th March last. It was a meeting of the club called to deal with the matter of putting the position of the club and the reasons why it should obtain a permit before the Racing Commission. That meeting appointed a committee of four, consisting of Messrs. Nahr, Colligan, Lawson, and Gothard, to wait on the Commission. Two of these gentlemen appeared before the Commission and two did not.

The Chairman: What were the directions given?

Mr. Slee: This is a draft of the minutes of the meeting I have with me, viz.: "Present—Colvin, Terry, Bucknell, Lawson, Carey, R. Colvin, A. Colvin, Hollis, Roche, Clarke, Sloan, Gothard (chairman), Rogers, Strachan, Knight. Mr. Gothard explained objects of meeting. Roche proposed and Hollis seconded. That Messrs. Gothard, Lawson, Nahr, and Colligan interview Borough Council with regard to getting information *re* beach reserve for racecourse; also that this committee meet the Commission on arrival and put all necessary particulars before them. (Carried.)" That was the only business dealt with that evening.

Mr. Davey: There has been no meeting of the club since?

Mr. Slee: No.

Mr. Davey: And no authority has been given by the club to withdraw the application?

Mr. Slee: Certainly not.

The Chairman: Were the two gentlemen who were absent from the first deputation notified of the hour the Commissioners intended to receive the deputation?

Mr. Slee: Yes. On receipt of your wire I immediately sent out a notice to the four committeemen appointing them that the Commission would meet them at 2.30 p.m. on Monday last. Again on the preceding Friday I sent another notice to each reminding them of the meeting. Each had two notices of the sitting of the Commission.

INTER-WANGANUI RACING CLUB.

The headquarters of the club are at Harihari, Westland. The club was formed in 1910, and is registered. The last meeting was held in December, 1913. A list of the present members of the club and a copy of the last balance-sheet have been forwarded. The course is ploughed and level with grass dressing. The circumference is 6 furlongs. The tenure of the course is leasehold, being a five-years lease of freehold property belonging to Mr. C. Davey, Harihari. There is ground accommodation for an unlimited number of people, publican's booth, refreshment-booth, urinals, jockeys' room, and secretary's room, and seats on the ground to accommodate two hundred people. The course is fenced on both sides of straight for 5 chains from judge's box; remainder of inside of course is to be fenced. The nearest club using the totalizator is at Hokitika, fifty-one miles distant. The nearest club not using the totalizator is sixty-two miles distant. We consider if we received a totalizator permit more people would attend the country meetings. Moreover, settlement being now firmly established in this district, settlers would go in more extensively for horse-breeding if they had the local encouragement and competition. The district is very isolated. The railway from Hokitika to Ross (fifteen miles) ends thirty-six miles from Harihari. There are three rough river-crossings—Mikonui, Little Waitaha, and Evans—which often impede traffic. It is not convenient for the settlers generally, being mostly regular suppliers to the cheese-factory, to leave their homes for the extended time necessary to attend the Hokitika race