

meetings, has for practically thirty years and down to the present time held an annual point-to-point steeplechase meeting of a truly sporting character for which no charge has ever been made to the public for admittance. Such steeplechases are confined to *bona fide* hunters, over courses of from three to four miles over stiff country, for trophies only given by members. The club has been the cause of a great many useful horses being bred in the district. Our hounds have been shown at various agricultural and pastoral shows, and have taken most of the prizes. Thirty years ago the club had a totalizator, but when the totalizators became regulated it did not get a permit, but the Marton Jockey Club did, and they worked conjointly for a time. Of late years the jockey club has made a donation of £30 annually, and has helped the club on and off during its career. We know that in a club such as this, where the hunting is over fairly rough country and a large amount of wire, that a class of horse is being bred which would be ideal for military purposes, and we feel sure it would be in the interests of the country and of the Empire that the permits which are now available should be, so far as possible, allotted to clubs such as the Rangitikei Hunt.

By the Deputation.—The first hares were brought here in 1874, and hares were turned out in 1875. In 1876 we bought six hounds, but there was not sufficient sport, and Wanganui took them over and started a drag hunt. Later the country was getting more settled, and in 1881 we started the hounds. We held the first hunt club race meeting in 1880 at York Farm. After that we ran our hunt club meeting in conjunction with the Marton Jockey Club and on its course. We used to get permits from the police in those days. Then the Totalizator Act was passed, and wiped out hunt clubs altogether. The Marton Jockey Club agreed that if we would run our race there they would give a certain number of races for the hunt club, and that they would subsidize us. We were under the impression when we made the original arrangement that they were going to give us half their profits, but they only gave us £50 a year, and afterwards reduced it to £30. After our permit was taken away we had a point-to-point steeplechase every year, to which the public were admitted free. Last year we decided to attempt a race meeting instead of the point-to-point race. The Marton Jockey Club gave us every assistance, with the result that we made £35. That was really not more than the jockey club had given us. We have not a great membership. We would like to suggest that of the eight permits available for hunts, five should be given to this Island and three to the South Island. We have ideal hunting country with natural fences. We have a very small membership in comparison with the neighbouring hunts at Wanganui and Manawatu, but we have a greater sporting element in our club than is to be found in any other club. Our members are all hunting members. Our subscription is £4 4s., but notwithstanding our high subscription we have difficulty in keeping the club going. The Egmont-Wanganui Hunt have a much larger area, and they have many honorary members, and are therefore practically subsidized by the townspeople. They have mostly drag hunts. Although we have a smaller membership than the others we think we are entitled to more consideration, because practically the whole of our members follow the hounds. We have freehold kennels with 10½ acres, and we have a permanent huntsman. We have urged all along the absolute necessity of supporting hunt clubs, because it is certain that the best military horse is the hunter stamp. A number of us had to guarantee the club, and by that means we have just managed to keep going. Unless the racing clubs subsidize us liberally or the Government give us a permit, hunting will have to stop. We do not treat the farmers quite fairly now because we are not in a position to do so. We should pay for all the damage done to farmers, but the latter are very good and do not make many claims on us. We pay all claims that are made. The best horses supplied to the Government for military purposes have come from this country. The class of horse we have bred here has proved to be better than those in any other district. We think it is quite clear that if the Government subsidize stallions we must give some prospect to the individual who breeds the horses of selling them. We would suggest to the Commission the advisability of making some recommendation on that point. We think that by encouraging hunting breeders would get a better price for their horses, and would thereby be induced to produce horses which would always be suitable for military purposes. For the last three months our late huntsman, Mr. Bill, has been purchasing remounts for the Government, and Colonel Reakes has informed him that all the best horses are those coming from the hunting countries. Colonel Reakes also informed him that all the horses coming from this district were the best in the North Island. Again, this club has spent much time and money in endeavouring to improve the breed of hounds. We have always been against anything in the nature of drag hunts. Ours is genuine hunting. We do not profess to breed steeplechasers, but a good stamp of weight-carrying hack. At the present time we have twenty-one couples of hounds in the kennels. The Rangitikei Hunt Club Cup has always been looked upon by sporting men as the one they wanted on their sideboard. We would suggest that if it is found impossible to divide the permits amongst a large number of clubs, it might be possible to arrange that certain clubs should have a meeting one year and certain others a meeting in the following year. We regard Marton as the most central position in the North Island.

MANAWATU HUNT CLUB.

The headquarters of the club are at Palmerston North. The club was formed in 1909, and is registered. The last meeting was held in August, 1914. A list of the present members of the club and a copy of the last balance-sheet have been forwarded. The steeplechase meetings are held on the Awapuni course, the property of the Manawatu Racing Club. We are now incorporated under the Unclassified Societies Act, and have a liability of £1,000 (guaranteed by five of our officials) on a property close to Palmerston on which is established permanent kennels for the keeping and breeding of hounds for the encouragement of hunting. The great stretch of