

at Waikouaiti, forty miles distant from Wingatui. The nearest club not using the totalizator is at Middelmarsh, forty miles from Wingatui. This club did not hold a race meeting last year, and we understand that it is now defunct. The Middelmarsh branch of the Otago Hunt holds a point-to-point steeplechase annually. We are the only hunt club in Otago, and there is no other hunt club within a radius of considerably over a hundred miles. We have branches at Taieri and Middelmarsh, and are now forming branches at Milton (to include Lawrence and Balclutha) and Waikouaiti (to include Palmerston). We respectfully remind you that the argument in favour of granting permits to hunt clubs was that it would encourage the breeding of hunters, and we feel sure that to secure that good result the permits will be distributed evenly over the whole of the Dominion. In such case the Otago Hunt is, we suggest, able to make out a very strong case in support of its application. Our affairs have always been capably managed, and the local papers here congratulated us upon the excellent management of our last race meeting (5th September) at Wingatui.

By the Deputation.—We have a fairly large membersip, and our two branches at Taieri and Middelmarsh are keen and enthusiastic. In order to encourage the sport of hunting in the province these country branches only pay half-subscriptions. We send our hounds and huntsman to these districts whenever they apply for them. It is also our intention to establish the other branches above mentioned. We find it is impossible to do all we would like with only one pack of hounds, but it is our intention to duplicate the pack. It is an expensive matter to keep our kennels and hounds and huntsman going, and we feel that if a permit was granted we would be relieved of our financial worries and that things would go very smoothly. We have plenty of energy in the club, and we have new members joining each year. This year we expect a large increase in membership, which will compensate for the members who have gone to the front. We have a credit balance of £20 at the bank with which to start the season. We lease a piece of ground from the Ocean Beach Domain Board for our kennels. We have about sixteen or seventeen working couples of hounds. We have two stud hounds. Most of our hounds we have bred ourselves. We find it very hard to make ends meet on members' subscriptions only. We have had a hunt steeplechase meeting on the Wingatui course each year since the club was revived. We have always endeavoured to carry out our meetings according to the rules of racing. Our application is strongly supported by the executive of the Dunedin Jockey Club, who are in a good position to know whether we as a club should receive favourable consideration. The jockey club has been very good to us, and has subsidized our funds each year. Our programme consists of a bracelet, hack race, two hurdle races, and two steeplechases, so we have tried to cater for all classes. We had to put on a hack race in order to avoid a loss at the meeting. The necessity for that would not exist if we had a permit. We are the only hunt in the Province of Otago. When the club was re-formed it was quite deplorable to see the class of hunters that took part. There were a few exceptions. But a marked improvement has been shown, and it is very rare now that a member comes a cropper, and we think our fences and courses are just as stiff as any in New Zealand. One of our members is the owner of an imported hunter stallion, and it served eighty mares in the Taieri district last year and eighty-two in the Middelmarsh district this year. The suggestion has been made that if the club was in a position to take over that stallion it would give the huntsman something to do in the off-season. The whip could look after the hounds and we could thus keep our servants together. This shows, we submit, that we are not asking for a permit for racing or gambling purposes only. We merely want to encourage clean sport and to improve the breed of horses. A great number of young fellows have learned to ride in the Otago District by reason of the presence of our hunt, and a very great number of them have gone to the front and have taken their horses with them. We find they are the first to volunteer for the front. Over fifty of our members, including three secretaries, have gone to the front. We find now that at the agricultural shows in the district it is very difficult to win a jumping event owing to the number of good horses competing, nearly all of which have been schooled in our hunting-fields.

BIRCHWOOD HUNT.

The headquarters of the club are at Otautau. The club was formed in 1886, and is registered. The last meeting was held in September, 1914. A list of the present members of the club and a copy of the club's last balance-sheet have been forwarded. A race-track of 7 to 8 furlongs would be available. We have secured an option of 80 acres at Strathmore, Otautau, of land suitably adapted for a racecourse. This land is ring-fenced only, and in the event of a totalizator permit being granted we will be prepared to immediately purchase the property and take in hand all necessary work and improvements thereon. The nearest club using the totalizator is at Wairio, twelve miles distant. The nearest club not using the totalizator is at Otautau. We consider we have a special claim for consideration as we are one of the oldest hunt clubs in the Dominion, having hunted continuously since 1886. Since 1899 the executive has held an annual hunt race meeting, and since bookmakers were excluded from courses this meeting has been run at the expense of the members. We have been largely responsible for the high standard of hacks and hunters for which the western district has for many years been noted throughout the South Island. This has been amply proved by the number of horses obtained by the Defence Department at the time of the South African War, and again just recently when horses were required for the Expeditionary Force. A number of good racehorses and steeplechasers have been brought out by us by our little race meetings and point-to-point steeplechases, one of them, Magdala, winning a Winter Cup amongst other good races, and another, Honest Tom, establishing a record for the Dominion for two miles and a half over steeplechase country on the Riccarton course. The management is in the hands of experienced men who have the sport of hunting at heart, and have made a success of the hunt, and, despite a very big struggle, have placed the