



NOTES ON SPORT

PAGEANTRY AT THE BASIN RESERVE

The National Championships

ON the Basin Reserve, which quite failed to redeem its poor reputation as an athletic ground, the National Track and Field Athletic Championships naturally produced no world's records. The track was no faster than the pessimistic ever expect it to be. Wellington had had no fine weather to stiffen it, and throughout the meeting there was an uncomfortable wind. In the circumstances, the fact that local records were even approached was sufficient reward for the work of a very fine collection of athletes.

Even without records, the meeting had its brighter moments.

There was a crazy "Mile of the Century," when the field made a slow record for the first two laps and really startling time for the second half-mile.

There were Welchart's attempts on the pole vault record, first in a fading evening light, and, on the following day, against the wind with the sun in his eyes. This item might have been appreciated more if the pit had been dug nearer the grandstand, or if the competitors had not been forced to jump towards the crowd as well as into the wind and sun because the socket had been put down with no consideration for any of these points. For similar reasons, the broad jump lost all its attraction as an event. It could have been very useful to fill in waits as the programme dwindled and was held up for the arrival of Austin, a Dunedin linotype operator who travelled more than 2000 miles in the training that won him the marathon.

The broad jump pit was so dug that people could not see how far the men were jumping. It was impossible to raise interest in it.

Boot's Farewell Performance

And there was the half-mile, Boot's farewell performance at a championship meeting. He ran with the perfect judgment to be expected of one who has become a classic runner, and with the classic style of a true champion.

There was the three miles, and the impact of young Dickson's first appearance at a national meeting; his energy-saving easy style, his obvious physical fitness, the ease with which he ran away from the field, and the excellent time he made, almost wholly unpeaked.

There was Tyrie's justification of his own confidence in his undoubted ability as a quarter-miler. There were Sharp-ley's successes in hurdles and sprints, the perfection of the easy effort he made of each co-ordinated movement. There was McCarthy's walking.

The Olympic Ceremonial

There was the relay, with no runner ever more than a yard or two in front of the next man, and Otago's determined but unsuccessful effort to win the crucial points with Boot in a good position to run the last 880 as he pleased. And there was the Olympic ceremonial.

Of all the features of the meeting, this was the most interesting. Its introduction as part of sports meetings had been discussed by the Wellington Centre of the N.Z.A.A.A. following on recommendations from Hawke's Bay-Poverty Bay.

It had been received, we thought, without a great deal of enthusiasm. And it seemed at the Basin Reserve as if the crowd sportingly co-operated, but not over-enthusiastically.

Monotonous

It was not, for one thing, carried out as if much enthusiasm had been given to its organisation. As the winners came for their medals after each race, the tiered stand on which they had to pose resembled a little too closely a pile of painted petrol cases. The exhortations of the announcer to the crowd to "Pay Tribute!" sounded a bit like an Alexander Korda picture with Mr. Korda out of touch. The endless jumping up and down on the part of the crowd to pay this tribute every five or ten minutes seemed just a little too much of a good thing. The endless repetition of the same "fanfare of trumpets" by the cornets of the band, seemed a little too repetitious.

The Lighter Touch

The monotony was certainly relieved when the child's half-hose, unwashed, was raised instead of flags after the hilarious boys' mile walk, and when the instrument case was raised for the bandsmen's races; but this lighter touch came dangerously near making the serious aspect of the ceremony a little farcical.

That sort of thing might be swallowed whole in some countries. It might even go down here if the athletes were prepared to lend themselves to making it into a glorified open air revue. But athletes will not do this, and New Zealanders have not yet shown much indication that they appreciate the technique of the revival meeting anywhere outside the Gospel tent.

The energy put into organisation of this kind would be better employed if it were concentrated on improving ath-

letic standards. Disregarding the war, for a moment, this season has produced a whole crop of prospective record-breakers, more especially in the distance events. We have not heard of any specific cases of properly organised efforts to help them.

HIS LUGGAGE BROUGHT HIM

Moving House From Napier To Wellington

WHEN young Ian Macdonald found he had to shift from Napier to Wellington this month, his first worry, naturally, was how to bring his bag and baggage with him. The problem solved itself. The bag and baggage brought him. It was a yacht.

A small yacht, it must be admitted; but nevertheless a very sturdy little yacht, with a chunky-looking hull of 24 feet overall, a straight stem coming back to a counter stern with a prettily running sheer in spite of the broad eight-foot-six beam. For a cutter rig she carried a boom overhanging two feet, and in the sail locker was all that any man would want for any weather.

She was a handy cruiser; not fast, but seaworthy, and already she had sailed often between Napier, Tauranga, and Auckland.

Down under was enough for himself and his brother Douglas, a kerosene cooker, and room for plenty of stores.

Hove To

A northerly took them out of the narrow passage from Napier's boat anchorage on the Tuesday evening. It did not last. They had a spell of drifting in light airs or no airs at all. Wednesday was not much better. The wind was easterly, with a bit of south, and by Thursday night had freshened so that they had to heave to.

They had run 20 or 30 miles out to sea and back to find that the southerly would not let them make more than 10 miles for all their trouble. But by Friday evening conditions were improving. The wind changed again. Once more they had the spinnaker up. Once more they had to take it down. There was plenty of variety. Soon the main had to be reefed as well, and Tui had to thrust her broad stem through the water as best she would with a full reef in, for the jib had been fouled on the pro-

pellor and she would not handle with the main full out.

Reefs notwithstanding, the wind came round where they wanted it off Cape Palliser, and they came into Port Nicholson in style, although hoping critical eyes from land were not calling them fine weather sailors for reefing down in an easy breeze.

No Room to Put It

Now Ian is looking for a mooring. Wellington has plenty of harbour, but not many places where the growing number of boats can be tied up. "Something must be done," say the yachtsmen. Nothing is.

In Napier they also have trouble finding a good place for their boats. Once Napier was ideal for yachting, with 20 miles of nearly inland water. But the earthquake stole that from them. Now they have to tie up in what was the entrance to the boat harbour, where it is "fairly sheltered." In a southerly, the passage up the narrow channel is difficult work, especially with the fast moving patikis.

These boats are Napier's specialties. Napier has a small fleet. There were two keelers. Now there's one. There were five of the famous patikis. Now there are four. Ian Macdonald once sailed on *Sayonara*. Not long ago she dragged a mooring, swung in the stream on a full tide, and dropped as the tide went down fairly atop a trawler sunk nearby. She was holed badly, and may not be repaired.

Macdonald would feel more at home on Port Nicholson waters if he could see some of these craft in Wellington. They are open flat-bottomed boats, carrying an area of sail which seems out of all proportion to their flimsy hulls. They draw only a few inches, and sail like hydroplanes in any sort of breeze. They handle very fast, and demand a smart crew; but they also handle very easily, and can outpoint almost any other type of boat in the speed with which they go about.

In Napier, where the prevailing sea breeze usually means fairly flat water, they are ideal, well handled. In Wellington, Macdonald thinks, they would be very successful. Napier yachtsmen sail on open water. Wellington Harbour water can be rough, and develops an awkward, irregular chop, but patiki owners could choose their weather.

However, he has *Tui* to keep him busy, and the patikis at present are for Wellington only a memory of the Napier representative's performances at the Centennial regatta.