

SPORT

by

S. V. McEwen

Men with the gout, dyspeptics and retired colonels have the exclusive right to growling in this period of goodwill. But when the Editor asked for the copy for this page several days early on account of the holidays, I joined issue with the afore-mentioned mortals. When one looks around, there is really a good deal to growl about.

MY pet hate at the moment is the gentlemen who govern the game of golf. They have found that Henry Cotton can hit the ball too far and make the game look too easy so they are proposing to produce a ball that won't carry so far.

As one who is good for a hundred—or more—any old day, I loudly protest.

Put the brake on Cotton if you must ye Royal and Ancient gentlemen, but please don't dilute the pleasure which I derive from that very occasional drive of mine which flukily reaches Cottonistic dimensions.

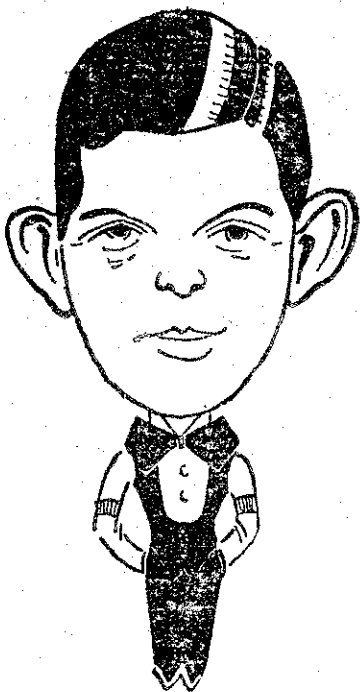
For every scratch player that wields a club today, there are thousands like myself who enjoy the health-giving qualities of golf, but who will never graduate from the "rabbit" class.

One of the greatest joys of the game for we untouchables is to crack an occasional screamer down the middle of the fairway. We don't know how we manage it, and we just live for the day when we'll be able to do it again.

Are we to be deprived of this joy because Henry Cotton and his

professional colleagues can do it every time they try?

So they should! They do little else than play golf, and if, by their own personal efforts, they achieve that state of near-perfec-



Walter Lindrum, master cueist, whose skill commanded unwelcome interference from the rulers of the game of billiards.

tion, they surely are entitled to all they get, without any interference from those in control of the game.

The Brake

THIS interference in an effort to check individual skill might easily reach absurd lengths.

Imagine Bradman batting in a straight jacket and Wooderson running a snappy mile in fishing waders!

One of the most "unjustifiable penalties ever imposed to frustrate individual skill was the baulk-line rule in billiards.

It was necessary, we were told, to overcome the monotony of the nursery cannon game which some of the leading players of world-class were exploiting in the composition of four-figure breaks, and the day of the five-figure break looked near at hand.

I feel very strongly, however, that it was a veiled effort to put the brake on Australia's wizard of the cue, Walter Lindrum, who was so immeasurably superior to his contemporaries that he could almost play them with one hand tied behind his back.

Lindrum transformed the cue into a wand, using it for our bedazzlement till we followed him in a trance along his processional way.

In several other forms of sport we have seen the hand of the reformer who delights in placing a barrier before individual skill, rather than encouraging it.

These reformers appear to overlook the fact that it should be the right of the best man to win in any game.

World-Famous

THE Clyde Quay School in Wellington celebrated its jubilee last week, and among



C. S. Dempster, formerly of Wellington, and now captain of the Leicestershire county team in England, is at present visiting New Zealand, and will be one of the star performers in the Sir Julien Cahn's team, which is to open a tour of the Dominion shortly. Dempster was our leading international in his day, and provides evidence of the fact that our native-born cricketers are of required class when they get the opportunity.

those present were several men who have played a prominent part in New Zealand's association with international sport.

The late E. E. ("General") Booth, famous All Black of the early part of the present century; Jimmy Wilton, New Zealand's best quarter-miler of his day and a member of the record-breaking Army relay team; Herb and Les McGirr; Len and Don France; Noel Wilson, and Wiri Baker were prominent figures in New Zealand sport who received their early schooling at Clyde Quay.

Not the least famous of those attending the various functions was Stewart Dempster, who arrived from London last week with his bride.

A little more than six years ago Dempster went to England to exploit his cricketing skill and it is now well known that he qualified to play for Leicestershire, and is now the captain of that successful county XI.

Dempster speaks enthusiastically of the revival of cricket in England and he attributes it to the introduction of the new l.b.w. rule which has compelled the batsman to develop his stroke play and rely less upon his pads as a means of defence; and to the insistence of the M.C.C. that natural wickets must be played on.

It is heartening to learn that the day of the doctored wicket is at an end. It means that a repetition of that absurd and grotesque affair between England and Australia at the Oval last August will be an impossibility in the future.

It means also that the bowler will once more take his rightful place in the game of cricket.

Is it right that any wicket should be so over-prepared that it deprives the bowler of his pace and spin? Lion-hearted Bill O'Reilly was rightly described as the best bowler of his type in the world, yet a doc-

tored wicket at the Oval for the fifth Test rendered him impotent.

Seeds of Decay

TIMELESS cricket may mean record-breaking scores by the batsmen and more gate-money, but I fear that ultimately it will sow the seeds of decay in this greatest of summer games.

On this point Dempster is quite emphatic. "What is wrong with playing on a wet wicket?" he asks. "The perfect shirt-front wickets that they used to prepare in England nearly ruined cricket from the point of view of the spectator. It might be good fun for the batsman hitting every other ball against the fence, but what of the bowler? No wonder everyone was deploring the fact that bowling was becoming an extinct art. The natural wicket gives batsmen and bowlers an even chance and makes the game so much more entertaining."

Dempster is right. Mammoth scores alone will never hold the game in public favour.

Changes in the pitch due to the influence of the weather add spice to the game and some of the most thrilling matches ever played produced the lowest scores because the bowlers were able to ply their guile and the wicket kept the batsman guessing.

There is a good deal in the contention that fighting finishes on sporting wickets, which hold the balance between batsman and bowler reasonably even, will get the people back to our cricket grounds, and that the game is more likely to prosper when played by batsmen developed in the hard school of difficult conditions, and bowlers encouraged to subtlety and skill by turf which helps their art.

The future welfare of cricket, therefore, will depend in the first place upon the groundsmen who prepare the wickets. Test cricket as played to-day on doctored wickets is little more than a mockery.

SPORT ON THE AIR

JANUARY 2.

Commencing at 12 noon, a running commentary on the Auckland Racing Club's meeting at Ellerslie Racecourse will be broadcast by 1YA.

Progress reports on the Plunket Shield cricket match, Wellington v. Canterbury, and on the New Zealand tennis championships (being held at Wilding Park) will be broadcast throughout the day by 3YA. A review of the day's play in the cricket match will be broadcast at 7.20 p.m.

A running commentary on the Canterbury Trotting Club's meeting at Addington will be broadcast by 3YA at 12 noon.

Commentaries on the play in the Plunket Shield cricket match, Otago v. Auckland, will be broadcast from 4YA at 11 a.m., and at intervals.

JANUARY 3.

A running commentary on the Auckland Racing Club's meeting at Ellerslie Racecourse will be broadcast by 1YA at 12 noon.

Progress reports on the Plunket Shield cricket match, Wellington v. Canterbury, will be broadcast from 3YA at 11.30 a.m., and a review of the day's play will be given at 7.20 p.m. Progress reports, from Wilding Park, of the New Zealand tennis championships will be broadcast at 2 p.m.

At 11 a.m., and at intervals, commentaries on the play in the Plunket Shield cricket match, Otago v. Auckland, will be broadcast from 4YA.

JANUARY 4.

Progress reports of the New Zealand tennis championships will be broadcast from 3YA between 12 noon and 3 p.m.

At 11 a.m., and at intervals, commentaries on the play in the Plunket Shield cricket match, Otago v. Auckland, will be broadcast by 4YA.

JANUARY 5.

Progress reports of the New Zealand tennis championships will be broadcast from 3YA between 2 and 3 p.m., and a review will be given at 7.20 p.m.

JANUARY 6.

Progress reports on the New Zealand tennis championships will be broadcast from 3YA between 2 and 3 p.m., and a review will be given at 7.20 p.m.

JANUARY 7.

Progress reports of the final games in the New Zealand tennis championships, being held at Wilding Park, will be broadcast from 3YA between 11 a.m. and 12 noon.