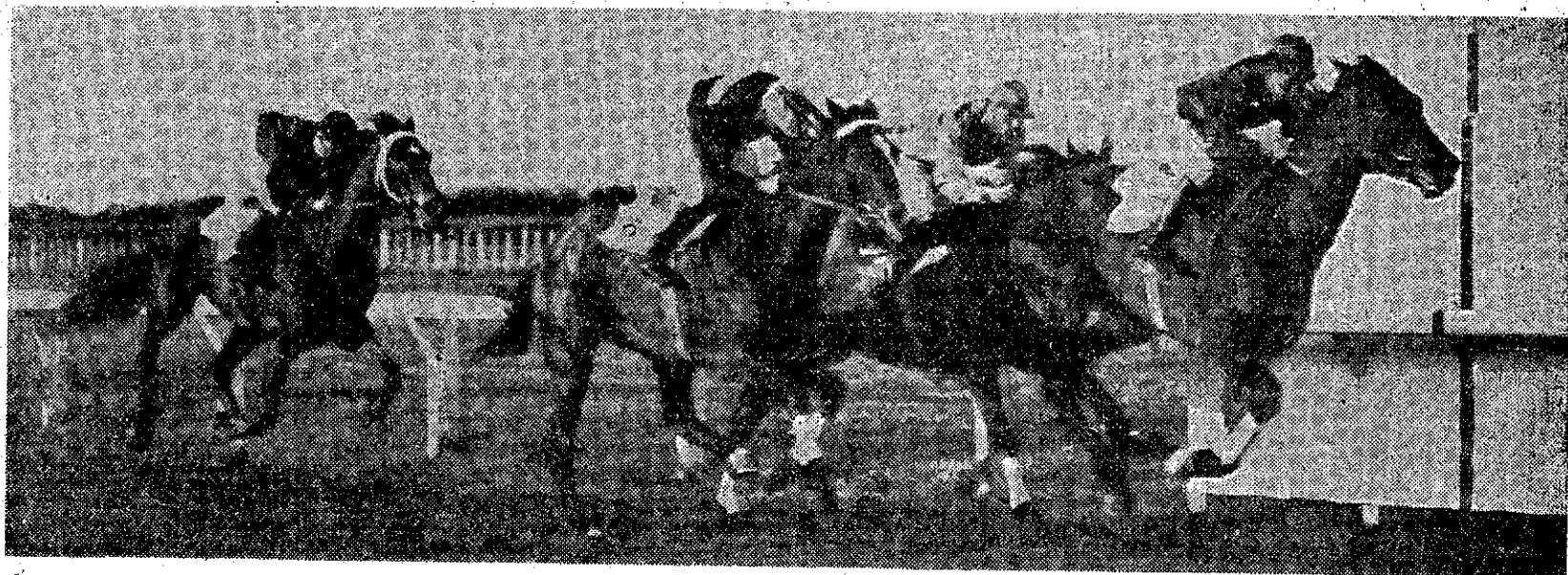




Winners in the Making

THE subject of horse-training opens up a very wide field for discussion, for, while racing is our biggest sport, it is also one of our biggest industries. When the average race-goer casually walks up at the races and speculates a pound-note on the totalisator he has little or no idea of the patience, the labour, the worry and anxiety, to say nothing of the expense, that has been involved to produce the thoroughbred of his fancy fit and well and ready to take his place in the field. The process of rearing a young racehorse and fitting him for a contest on the Turf is a long and arduous one, requiring the maximum of patience both on the part of the owner, who provides the money, and the trainer upon whom rests the responsibility of educating the young animal to that stage where he can make full use of the physical qualities with which nature has endowed him.

It is impossible, in the short time at my disposal, to cover all phases of the horse-training profession. The different types, such as sprinters, stayers, hurdlers and steeplechasers, require different preparations. Probably it will interest you more if I confine my remarks to the methods generally adopted in the rearing and educating of thoroughbreds from the time they are foaled until they are ready to race as two-year-olds. Methods vary slightly, but generally those I will outline this evening may be accepted as the general practice in vogue in New Zealand.

Young horses are acquired either by the owner breeding them himself or by buying them at the yearling sales or direct from the breeding establishments of which there are many in this country. When buying at the sale ring, an owner and his trainer are usually guided by the conformation of the animal, its freedom from blemishes, its type and character and the breeding and performances of the family from which it springs.

A very watchful eye is required to avoid accident or injury to the young horse until he reaches the stage where he is taken in hand to be broken-in—usually at the age of 16 or 17 months. This is a most anxious time in the young horse's career. If he is healthy, the youngster is full of vitality and fire and usually he shows strong resentment to

A feature of the novelty racing programme broadcast from 2YA on July 12 was this talk on horse training given by the well-known trainer, Mr. S. J. Reid



the strange gear which is used in a friendly way, but nevertheless firmly, to entice him to answer the command of his master. After two or three days of preparatory work in which he is lunged with the gear on, he is taught to drive. Mouthing, that important process which in the future will give his rider supreme control through reins and bit, is accomplished by the use of long driving reins. After having a light boy legged on to him occasionally, he becomes accustomed to feeling weight on his back. When the time comes for him to be ridden, a good man mounted on a quiet hack holds the youngster by the head while the boy is mounted. In experienced hands there is little chance of the juvenile doing much harm, even though his proud young feelings may be somewhat hurt. Once the youngster has shown himself amenable to discipline he is taken to the racecourse, where he is trotted and cantered along an area specially set aside for the education of rising two-year-olds, and gradually his paces are increased, though on no account is he allowed to over-tire himself.

IT is not for eight or ten weeks after he is broken-in that he is allowed to show any speed, and then only a brisk gallop of one or two furlongs. All horses are gallopers naturally, and the careful and patient work of the period from breaking-in until they are speeded up in their work is done with the object of teaching them to use their natural talents under control.

In most of their outings after they are broken-in young horses are accompanied by a sedate old stager from the stable who acts as a schoolmaster. Strange noises and sights which tend to upset the young horse have no effect on him, and his exemplary behaviour seldom fails to restrain the unruly or nervous youngster, providing he is ridden by a competent boy. The older horse also fulfils the part of teacher when the youngsters go to barrier practice. They have to be taught to leave the barrier smartly and gather their speed quickly, and, with an old horse to lead them out, their education becomes much more simplified. In this important phase of their education good riding is absolutely essential. Those of you who go to Trentham to-morrow will probably see a batch of rising two-year-olds scamper down the (Continued overleaf.)