



# They're Off!

## Race Meetings to be Broadcast

**P**ERMISSION last week was granted by the racing and trotting authorities to the Broadcasting Board to broadcast running descriptions of the meetings of both racing and trotting clubs. In making the announcement, Mr. Vickery stated that the events of the Canterbury Jockey Club's National meeting on August 9, 11 and 13, and the programme on the 10th and 12th of the New Zealand Metropolitan Trotting Club would also be broadcast.

Arrangements have been made to broadcast from the YA stations the Grand National Steeplechase, the Winter Cup, and the Grand National Hurdle Race. Other events at both of the meetings referred to will be broadcast only from 3YA.

At the present time the Board proposes to broadcast only from the courses at the four centres, but in special cases would undoubtedly go further afield. Mr. Vickery expressed his desire to pay tribute to the racing authorities for the courteous treatment extended to the Board during the course of negotiations, and stated that the Board was very much indebted to the racing and trotting conferences for the reasonable and businesslike manner in which the whole matter had been handled.

The first race meeting to be broadcast in the Dominion was that of the Canterbury Park Trotting Club's June, 1926, meeting, the broadcast being sent out by an amateur station, 3AC. Then for two years the racing and trotting meetings in the four main centres, with the exception of the Dunedin Jockey Club's meetings, were regularly radioed, often with the full co-operation of the clubs, but sometimes under the difficulties of an external view.

Broadcasting then ceased to be a feature of race-days, but the successful result of the recent negotiations that have been carried out between the Racing and Trotting Conferences and the Broadcasting Board gives the Board official sanction to include descriptions of meetings in its programmes.

Not only was the Canterbury Park meeting of June, 1926, the first to be described by radio, but it was one of the first in the world to be so treated. In the following month, the Grand National races were broadcast, but not from the course. The C.J.C. committee did not desire any possible distraction of its officials or patrons, but gave permission, provided the announcer, Mr. Allan R. Allardyce, made his own arrangements. The result was that those not present at the meeting were given his vivid, racy descriptions from a haystack, the late Mr. J. McCombe allowing the use of his private telephone for the purpose.

**T**HE success of this broadcast persuaded the club officers to allow the announcer to be installed on one of the stands for its next fixture, the New Zealand Cup meeting in November of that year.

The first broadcast of a race gathering held at Ellerslie, the Auckland course, was in December. Two days of the W.R.C. July meeting were broadcast in the following season. This was a week prior to the official opening of station 2YA, and the Ranfurly Shield match on July 9, 1927, and the racing were really test programmes. The initial Dunedin trotting radio was at the Forbury Park meeting in November, and the last meeting to be broadcast under official auspices was the Wellington winter meeting, 1928—four years ago.

Among racing executives there has been a diversity of opinion on the advisability of using the radio as an adjunct to racing. On the one hand, it was argued that as the meetings were of interest to many thousands unable to attend them, clubs were acting in the public interest in permitting broadcasting, and were also helping the sport by this simultaneous publicity. On the other hand, it was contended that broadcasting was an incentive to patrons of the sport to stay at home and bet with a bookmaker.

