

# THE HOLIDAY.

## Opening of the New Cook's Gardens Track.

Ceremony Performed by the Hon. Colonial Secretary.

## Wanganui A.A. and C. Club's Sports.

A wretched night and a worse than threatening morning formed a bad prelude to the big sports meeting arranged by the Wanganui Amateur Athletic and Cycling Club to celebrate the opening of the recently finished sports ground and cycling track in Cook's Gardens. So bad indeed was the night, and so heavy the down-pour, that the officers of the Club had reluctantly to decide that all running and athletic events could not be got off, the running track being very sloppy. However, in order not to disappoint the large number of the public, who were looking forward to a good day's sport, or the visiting cyclists who had come such distances to take part, it was resolved that the most attractive element of the meeting—the wheel events—should be duly gone on with. The day's proceedings opened with a

### Luncheon.

at the Mesropolitan Hotel, where Host Brennan had provided a capital spread. The chair was occupied by His Worship the Mayor (Mr J. L. Stevenson), who was supported on the right hand by the Hon James Carroll (Colonial Secretary and Minister for Native Affairs), and on his left by the member for the district (Mr Gilbert Carson), and Mr F. Pirani, M.H.R. for Palmerston North. Among those present were Mr A. Higgin (Chairman of the Wanganui County Council), Mr A. J. Parsons (Chairman of the Hospital Board), Mr J. Stewart (Chairman of the River Trust Board), Councillors E. N. Liffon, T. D. Cummins, E. Perritt, G. W. Collins, and P. Bell; Major Sommerville, Mr A. D. Thomson (President of the Rugby Union), M. J. G. McNaught (Chairman of the Board of Control of Cook's Gardens), and members of other local bodies and of the Board of Control, etc.

After justice had been done to the good

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things provided, a short toast list was started and the usual loyal toast was heartily honoured.

Mr Stevenson then proposed the health of the Hon Mr Carroll, which was drunk with musical honours.

The Minister, in reply, thanked those present for the hearty manner in which the toast had been received. After a few happy remarks of a personal nature, Mr Carroll went on to refer to the creditable public spiritedness shown by the people of Wanganui. He was, he said, here but a short time ago for the opening of the fine new hospital; he was here now to open a new athletic park; while they had other things in existence, of which Wanganui residents should feel proud. These things plainly showed that those who had control of local affairs were men of a high public spirit, who would not forfeit a single occasion where they could facilitate the comfort, amusement and recreation of the community. He only wished that in a corresponding ratio their example could be followed in the larger field. Mr Carroll concluded by proposing "success to the new athletic ground" coupled with the success of the Mayor, Mr Empson and Mr McNaught.

Mr Stevenson having briefly returned thanks,

Mr Empson followed, and spoke at some length as to what had been accomplished in connection with the ground paying an especial tribute to the very valuable assistance so freely given by Mr Noble Beasley. In the course of his remarks Mr Empson expressed regret at the undue preponderance which bicycling had obtained over the old running races and said that, from present appearances a good mile running would in a few years be as rare a thing as was a spring day in Wanganui without wind or rain.

Mr McNaught, after expressing regret that unfavourable weather should mar the engagement of the public, Mr Carroll and the visiting cyclists, and other competitors who had come from all parts of the colony, briefly referred to the up-hill work experienced by the Board of Control and to the assistance that had been so generously given by the public, the ladies, Mr Beasley, and other special helpers. Mr McNaught concluded by stating that they were highly gratified to know that their labour had not been lost, and by returning thanks on behalf of the members of the Board of Control.

Mr Pirani heartily joined in the con

gratulations, and said that when the idea was first mooted he, with others, had visited the spot, and had looked upon the proposed work as almost impossible. However, the work had been accomplished, and the result was highly creditable to all concerned. He joined with Mr Empson in regretting the decline of the old style of athletic events, but he nevertheless looked upon cycling as a manly sport. He was the winner of the first amateur athletic race ever run in Wanganui—a matter of twenty years ago—and he knew that the people then as they did now, recognised and encouraged manly sport. Mr Pirani concluded by wishing the ground every success, and expressed a hope that those who had to do with the Board of Control would make it so.

Mr Carson followed, and in a few happy remarks added his congratulations to those already given.

After the luncheon an adjournment was at once made to the grounds, where everything was in readiness for the

#### Official Ceremony.

Shortly after 12.30 the Minister and party drove up to the St Hill Street entrance, where they were met by the officers of the Board of Control and conducted to a specially improvised platform in the sports enclosure, the Garrison Band, under Bandmaster Richardson, meanwhile playing an appropriate selection.

From this platform the Hon Mr Carroll who was introduced by the Mayor, addressed the large crowd which had already assembled.

Mr Carroll said he was very pleased to be afforded an opportunity of saying a few words with reference to the magnificent ground they were about to open, and of thanking them for the honour they had done him in inviting him to perform the opening ceremony. Before he proceeded, however, he wished to apologise for the absence of the Hon the Premier, and to read to them a telegram he had just then received from Mr Seddon, in which he said he should have preferred being with them to being tied to the drudgery of sessional business. However, it was duty first and pleasure afterwards, and he therefore asked Mr Carroll to convey to them his (Mr Seddon's) best wishes. Continuing, Mr Carroll, after a few further remarks, read the following

extract from a communication received by him, as showing concisely the history of the ground:—

Some eighteen months ago the members of the Wanganui Amateur Athletic and Cycling Club decided to lay down a thoroughly up-to-date running track and banked cycling track on Cook's Gardens, permission being given by the local Borough Council to do so. The members of the Club then decided to raise a portion of the money required by a monster Bazaar and Art Union, and with that object, decided to ask the co-operation and assistance of the local Rugby Union and United Cricket Club. These bodies called a meeting of the ladies of Wanganui to discuss the arrangements and ask their valuable assistance towards providing funds for an athletic ground in Cook's Gardens, laid out in such a manner that all field games could be indulged in. So well and heartily did the ladies of Wanganui take up the idea and set to work, that within four months the bazaar was an accomplished fact and a glorious success, to the amount of £367 nett, thanks in the first place to the forethought of the gentlemen acting on behalf of the three bodies named in meeting the ladies over a cup of afternoon tea from time to time on arranging matters, and secondly the valuable assistance and splendid work performed by the ladies who so kindly gave their time, money and assistance towards this object.

Then, too, said Mr Carroll, the following summary of moneys expended in connection with the whole work should be interesting:—

Net result from Bazaar and Art Union	£367	0	0
Adventures, raised by Amateur Members,	£105		
Adventures, raised by Rugby Union, £45	150	0	0

Loan from Borough Council	200	0	0
Value of work, working bees	70	0	5
Board of Control (raised by personal security to the Bank)	150	0	0
Value of work performed by Borough Council	130	0	0
Donations from business people	43	0	0
Prison labour for a period extending over eighteen months	450	0	0

After a few further appropriate remarks, the honourable gentleman concluded by again expressing the hope that the ground would be a thorough success, and that, in keeping with the praiseworthy efforts that had brought it into existence, nothing crooked or in any way dishonourable would be tolerated upon it. Mr Carroll then formally declared the grounds open.

His Worship the Mayor followed, and on behalf of the Borough Council and himself, congratulated the associated clubs on the possession of the excellent track and grounds. He said that the Council, in assisting the Board of Control, had done so with great pleasure, and he thought they could depend still further on their assistance, especially when they found they were so anxious to help themselves. The Council, in fact, was always ready to assist in any object that is for the good of the people. They must all feel proud that day when they saw the provision that had been made for encouraging all manly sport, and he believed our young men would not be slow to appreciate it. Great praise was due to Mr Beasley for the prominent part he had taken in the making of the ground, and also to the members of the committee and others who had assisted. In conclusion, on behalf of the people of Wanganui, Mr Stevenson tendered his heartfelt thanks to the Hon Mr Carroll for his kindness in coming from Wellington to open the grounds.

Three cheers were then given for Mr Carroll, who proceeded to open

### The Sports

by starting the first race of the day—the Two Mile Amateur Championship of New Zealand. And just here we must say a word as to the attractive appearance of the grounds. The well-made raised cycling track and the level sports enclosure, surrounded by the green hills, formed a natural amphitheatre. And these natural features, enhanced by the splendid appointments, provoked the unanimous opinion — “A model sports ground.” Many there were who considered that the wretched weather would spoil the sports, if it did not necessitate their postponement, while up to the opening hour few could be induced to believe that there would be anything like a big attendance. However, the prospect

of a break in the weather tempted holiday-makers out, and the result was a record gate of £109 14s, with a few tickets to come in. The fact that running events had to be excised necessitated a little drag between the cycling events, as of course the wheelmen could not be expected to compete in race after race without brief intermissions for rest. Still, with the lively music provided by the Garrison Band, the afternoon proved anything but dull, and the large crowd who ventured out were rewarded with some splendid sport. The arrangements for the day were perfect, and every officer of the Club, from the hard-worked Secretary (Mr J. H. Watt) is deserving of warm praise. Mr J. G. McNaught, as usual, made a most efficient starter; Messrs W. H. G. Foster, W. Tuck and W. P. Mussen had charge of the stop-watches; Messrs T. Drummond and E. W. Hainsworth manipulated the fine three-sided result-board; and the various other officials of the day carried out the duty with a promptitude that was highly creditable, not forgetting Mr F. W. Jones, jun., who displayed a good pair of lungs to advantage in manipulating the ununciator. Mr Beavis had charge of the refreshment booth, and did good business. The racing throughout was good, and it is worthy of note that the popular local crack, who was in excellent form, ably upheld the honour of his town, securing the Two Mile Championship of the Colony—the first race of day—and the Ladies' Bracelet, getting places in most of the other events, and carrying off the points prize; and this, notwithstanding that he met a representative number of the colony's best amateur riders, including Dexter (Auckland's worthy representative. The Davidsons were also in good form, and appropriated respectively the three and five mile events. Results:—

TWO-MILE CHAMPIONSHIP OF NEW ZEALAND.

J. A. Thomson (Wanganui) ... ..	1
H. A. Dexter (Auckland) ... ..	2
F. C. Davidson (Wanganui) ... ..	3

Caughy, Maxwell and Pocock also competed. This race, the first race on the new track for the Two-mile Amateur Championship of New Zealand, resulted in a splendid contest. Pocock led for the first three laps, with the local champion close on his wheel and the others bunched close up. Thomson led at the end of the

first mile, but on going round the back, near the dressing shed, Caughley took up the running and led for the best part of the lap, when Davidson came with a splendid spurt and shot to the front. From this out the race was a clinker, and as the field started on the final round Thomson whisked past Davidson, and, with the Auckland crack after him, left the others behind. A magnificent finish ensued, Thomson just winning on the post by about half a wheel, with Davidson a good third. Thomson also secured three of the lap prizes, Caughley obtained two, Pocock two, and Davidson one, Time—5min 53sec.

#### ONE-MILE NOVICE.

F. Southcombe, scratch	...	...	1
W. D. Armstrong, 105yds	...	...	2
C. Bowden, 35yds	...	...	3

A. T. Richards (Palmerston North) was the only other starter. From the start the scratch man settled down to business, and practically won as he liked by a good ten yards. Time, 2min 45sec.

#### HALF-MILE CYCLE HANDICAP.

##### First Heat.

F. W. Graham, 90yds (Auckland)	...	...	1
R. A. Dexter, scr (Auckland)	...	...	2
E. J. Davidson, 45yds (Wanganui)	...	...	3

Pocock and Armstrong also started.

##### Second Heat.

F. C. Davidson, 35yds	...	...	1
J. Donald, 45yds	...	...	2
J. Caughley, 5yds	...	...	3

A. Fountain also started. Time, 1min 9 3-5th sec.

##### Third Heat.

H. McCabe, 10yds	...	...	1
F. Southcombe, 55yds	...	...	2

A. Tucker also started. Time, 1min 14sec. Won cleverly.

##### Final Heat.

Graham	...	...	...	1
McCabe	...	...	...	2
F. C. Davidson	...	...	...	3

A splendid tussle. For a while it looked as though the Wanganui candidate would win. Graham shot out followed by the Nelson representative, and cut out the places. Time, 1min 9 1-5th.

#### ONE-MILE CYCLE HANDICAP.

##### First Heat.

B. C. Brandon, 130yds ...	...	...	1
W. K. Jonrdain, 70yds ...	...	...	2
G. A. Maxwell, 15yds ...	...	...	3

C. Bowden also started. Won easily.  
Time, 2min 42 3-5th sec.

Second Heat.

J. Donald, 75yds ...	...	...	1
J. A. Thomson, scratch ...	...	...	2
Graham, 25yds ...	...	...	3

Gcs, E. J. Davidson and Pocock also started. Graham led most of the distance, but Thomson came with a rattling spurt and was just beaten on the post. Time, 1min 42sec.

Final Heat.

J. A. Thomson, scratch...	...	...	†
G. A. Maxwell, 15yds ...	...	...	†
F. W. Graham, 25yds ...	...	...	3

Brandon's 130 yards start looked almost impossible to overtake, but the final round came as a revelation, the placed men driving their machines like the wind and quickly appropriating the places. The post was passed amidst cheers, the general opinion being that the local champion had again scored. This, however, was dispelled by the verdict of the judges, who gave it as a dead heat, in 2min 30sec.