



Scoring in the 2-18 Class.

Trotting on the Ice at Ottawa

LAST week's ice trotting races in Ottawa are described as the most successful in the history of the capital. For the past nine years these meetings have been under the direction of the Central Canada Racing Association, which is in affiliation with the National Trotting Association of the United States. The present association had a humble enough beginning with purses amounting to only \$1,200. Last week's prizes totalled \$10,300.

Ottawa is well adapted for the encouragement of the sport. Its proximity to Quebec and its large population of French Canadians have made the trotting horse what might be called a household God with a large class of the community. The keenest anticipation marks the weeks before the event, and really hilarious joy reigns in many parts of the capital during race week itself. The horses are followed by hundreds of men who live on the crowd, owners, trainers, jockeys, statesmen and camp followers, and the wise ones in Ottawa and the surrounding district cheerfully pry themselves loose from their money to send the bookmakers away rejoicing.

The game is some score of years old in Ottawa. There was not at first an annual meeting. Eventually the Ottawa Ice Racing Association was formed, but through inefficient management and want of connection with the large circuits, it made little substantial progress. There was at that time no authority to banish offenders against the track rules and popular suspicion attached to all the races.

One year the races were held on Lake Deschenes, opposite Aylmer, the little Quebec town just up the river, and for several years meetings were held on small lakes

in the vicinity of Hull. But there was no guarantee of squareness in dealing, and though the tracks were not actually outlawed, the existence of the sport was precarious.

Finally Messrs. P. H. Wall, Ald. Walter Cunningham, Edward McMahon, manager of the Central Canada Fair Association, E. J. O'Neill and the late Thomas Butler formed the present association, the Central Canada Ice Racing Association. This was nine years ago. After a couple of years competition with the old Ottawa Ice Racing Association the Central Canada Association won the field for itself.

As has been said, the association is in competition with the National Trotting Association, the track rules of which are so rigidly enforced that the sport has entirely outgrown its evil repute. The meetings are under Vice-regal patronage. The half-mile track is located in the middle of the Ottawa River about half a mile below the centre of the city. The fences, club sheds, cooling-off sheds and other buildings are of rough boardings, but the buildings are comfortably fitted to resist the bitter breezes which sweep the ice-bound river. This winter environment is, indeed, the only thing that differentiates the ice meeting from the ordinary summer trotting meet. The old sulky sleighs have given place to the regulation tyred sulkey and save for the heavy clothing which the drivers wear, the races themselves might be on the dirt track. The spectators muffle to the ears and stay out of doors only when the races are actually in progress.

When the invading host of horsemen strikes Ottawa those whose business brings them to the centre of the



Waiting for Returns of "Free for All."