

Mr. J. McNeill was sportsman, businessman

Widely known as the owner of a number of high-class race-horses and also well known in business circles in New Plymouth, Mr. James McNeill died today after an illness which caused his retirement from active business a year ago.

Born in Drumquin, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland, 80 years ago, Mr. McNeill came to New Zealand in 1906, settling in New Plymouth. He acquired a business on the corner of Gover Street and Devon Street East, in premises now occupied by the Bank of New Zealand. Two years later he built and moved into the grocery premises still carried on under the name of McNeill's (New Plymouth) Ltd.

Either on his own or in partnership, he had considerable racing interests during the latter period of his life. His outstanding horse was Crimson King, which won for him the 1953 Wellington Cup.

In partnership with Mr. J. Somerton, he raced Broleveine, Broledame, Eastern Charm and Brolealice. Broledame is perhaps best known as the dam of the 1952 Melbourne Cup winner, Dalray, which was bred in New Plymouth.

With Mr. Ivan McGuire, Mr. McNeill raced the Trentham and Eilerslie winners Fortune's Smile and Master Ted.

Always interested in racing, Mr. McNeill owned several high-class brood mares over the years but recently disposed of his racing interests.

Mr. McNeill devoted particular attention to golf, as a member of the New Plymouth Golf Club for many years. He was also a noted bowler and skipped the Fitzroy Club four which won the Taranaki Open Fours in 1923.

He was a member of the New Plymouth Rotary Club and the New Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and was keenly interested in horticulture.

Mr. McNeill, whose wife died earlier, leaves two sons, Messrs. Harry and Charlie, and one daughter, Mrs. E. Rhodes, all of New Plymouth. There are six grandchildren. He is survived also by two brothers, Dr. Beattie McNeill, of Drumquin, and Mr. William McNeill, who is a teacher in England.

