

Fitz Holds His Own in Dinner Talk

by **Hugh J. McGuire**

KEENELAND, Lexington, Ky., Oct. 21.—No one could be found who complained of the performance turned in by "Sunny Jim" Fitzsimmons at

the annual testimonial dinner of the Thoroughbred Club of America here on Thursday night. The octogenarian, the first of his profession so honored by the



club, was at his excellent best as he answered a list of questions that traced his life and activities through his long and colorful career. There can be no doubt that the straightforwardness of Mr. Fitz' answers and the fact that he did not spare himself added immeasurably to the charm of the occasion.

It was most interesting, too, to find that he was in accord with proposals, such as that of Lou Smith of Rockingham, to offer more races for 2- and 3-year-olds and to ask the youngsters to race longer distances after July. He pointed out also the inequality that now gives cheaper horses greater earning power than their superiors. There are few in the industry who disagree with the concepts of Mr. Fitz.

Busy Period Ahead

The Keeneland meeting comes to an end Saturday with the running of the Breeders' Futurity as the feature but there will be no cessation of activity in this area of the thoroughbred industry. Racing continues uninterrupted except for a change of locale to Churchill Downs at Louisville. The annual fall sales begin at Keeneland on Tuesday and run through November 2. These vendues will be followed by the climactic dispersal of the breeding stock of Henry H. Knight on November 3 at Coldstream Farm. The regional convention of mid-west state racing commissioners will take place in Louisville on November 3, 4 and 5 and this conclave will be followed immediately by the Farm Managers Courses at the University of Kentucky on November 7, 8 and 9. It is a full schedule with morning, afternoon and evening sessions.

The sale of yearlings at Keeneland will occupy four days, Tuesday through Friday, with afternoon and evening sessions on all days except Friday when there will be only an afternoon session. No less than 536 youngsters have been catalogued. Indications are that the sale will follow the usual pattern with the more select yearlings in brisk demand.

A review of some records of the past fall sales might be timely. In 1954, 620 yearlings were sold for \$1,275,200, an average of \$2,057. During the past five years, when more than 500 yearlings have been offered each year, the vendues of 1951 set the record both for total money and average. That year 646 yearlings brought \$1,504,500 to average \$2,329. In 1954, 293 colts averaged \$2,450 while 327 fillies averaged \$1,704.

Highest-Priced Youngsters

Highest price for a fall sales colt was \$42,000 paid to Idle Hour Stock Farm in 1945 by Leslie Combs 2nd for a bay son of Bimelech—Blinking Owl, who was to be named Star of Night. In 1951 Combs sold the second highest-priced colt, a son of Jet Pilot—Fantine, to Charles Foley for \$37,000. This was Super Jet. A filly has the record for fall sales. This was a daughter of Alibhai—Busher, later named Popularity, consigned in 1951 by Combs and sold to Louis B. Mayer for \$55,000. Next highest filly was the daughter of Jet Pilot—Knots of Roses, named Jets Dona Rosa, for whom P. A. B. Widener 3rd paid \$41,000 to Combs in 1951.

IN BRIEF: It came as a surprise or a reminder to many at the dinner of the Thoroughbred Club that "Mr. Fitz" was the first national president of the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association... Bob Read and Tom Shehan of the national HBPA were on hand for the dinner... The first claim of the meeting was recorded Thursday when Dan Lockner took Flying Bry from T. McKinley... A last minute change of plans by Clifford Mooers kept Dupatta in New York and out of the Breeders' Futurity. She probably would have been the only filly in the race.

Clifford Lussy's Tuosix suffered an injury to a small bone in his foot and will be turned out... Trainer Tom B. Young will break yearlings at Keeneland after the sales... The mares of the Aga Khan, who are to be sold at the Keeneland sales, and Fleur Bleue, dam of Blue Choir, who is being offered by the Cully Bloodstock Agency of Pat Kelly, may be seen Sunday and on following days at the Crown Crest

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Farm of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Reineman.

Veteran owner I. J. Collins of Lancaster, Ohio, appears quite spry as he takes in the Keeneland sport . . . Preston Burch inspected the Brookmeade stock at Crown Crest, Dan Scott's and Thomas Piatt's while here for the TCA dinner. . . E. D. Axton purchased the share in Doc Eggers held by trainer Nick Burger and is now sole owner of the colt. Burger will remain as trainer. . . A report has it that work on a new seven-furlong turf course has been started at River Downs.
