

ALL SET FOR GRAND NATIONAL.

On March the twenty-sixth, the Grand National, the toughest steeplechase of all, takes place. Tudor Line, beaten by a neck last year, is getting in trim for the great day at the Berton stable. Currently he's joint favourite. Trainer Bob Berton checks up on two more. Little Yid and No Response. Little Yid seems fit enough.

No Response hasn't been to Aintree before. Meanwhile trainer Fulke Walwyn looks over two of his string. One is gallant Mont Tremblant, third in 1953. He's in training with Mr. Chippendale, an outsider with quite a chance.

Trainer Neville Crump takes Goesander out despite the snow. Arthur Thompson is in the saddle. The recent bad weather may have a great effect on form this year, as an irregular training programme may have upset some of the runners. Over to Aintree, the course is made ready. Mrs. Topham looks at jump number seven, one of those which has been lowered this year for greater safety. Already, plans have been made for filming the event. All the newsreels companies are combining to bring every thrill of the steeplechase into the cinemas. Dozens of cameramen will be there to capture the full excitement of the gruelling battle.

Ireland, as always, provides some of the favourites for the National. Here's Royal Tan, last year's victor, parading for the thousand pound Leopardstown Chase at Dublin.

Vincent O'Brien, on the right, is again his trainer. National outsider Sundew was another entry, but most eyes were on the powerful Copp, a nine year old. In this race, which is regarded an Irish preview of the Grand National, Tony Prendergast was his jockey. Conditions weren't good over the three-mile, five-furlong course. Sundew was leading from Copp as they came up the last stretch. Then Prendergast called for an extra effort from Copp and slowly he gained on Sundew.

And Copp was in front. Still going strongly he held on to his lead, and roused home by a length.

Copp, mud-spattered but triumphant, became third favourite in the National on the strength of his performance. From 20-1 his odds shortened to 100-7. Will he hail the National winner as a "Fair Copp" this year? Certainly he's the stamina needed to win the world's greatest steeplechase.