

general appearance and state of efficiency, except the Turakina Rifle Company. There is an unusual proportion of Cavalry, who are generally well mounted, and take an interest in their work; the members are principally occupied in farming operations, and, from their interests in the district, would be of great service on an emergency.

Their breech-loading carbines are in a bad state of repair, and in fact are mostly worn out. As the men are nearly all employed in agricultural pursuits, and are much scattered, they can ill afford to go through any regular course of class-firing, but the district returns prove they are good shots, and take much interest in the practice.

Of the eight prizes for the breech-loading carbines, the first and third prizes were won by the Victoria Troop; and at the Colonial Prize Firing in Auckland, all the representatives (three) of this district took prizes, the total amount of which was the second highest in the North Island.

Wellington.

In March, the Volunteers of this district consisted of one Artillery, twelve Rifle, and four Cadet corps, amounting to 803, including 138 Cadets. Of this number five Rifle and three Cadet corps have been formed since June, 1870.

I am glad to be able to report upon the regular attendance of the members of the various corps, which has resulted in a marked improvement in the drill and efficiency of the old corps, whilst the new ones have made very fair progress. The total of efficient is 765, out of 803 enrolled members.

The Artillery are a very creditable corps, both in appearance and general efficiency. Their attendance is regular, and the way in which they work their guns shows that the members all take an interest and pride in their drill. Their shot and shell practice was good.

The country corps, including those at the Hutt, deserve especial mention, as they attend with great regularity, notwithstanding the distances they have to come to their respective parades, and Lieut.-Colonel Reader reports that it is quite the exception to have any absentees from the monthly inspection.

In point of drill, many of the older corps compare favourably with those in other districts which are similarly situated. Their arms generally are in very good order, and several of the corps have provided themselves with the new regulation uniform, which is serviceable, and adds much to their appearance. Only a portion of the Artillery and one of the town companies have been through a course of class firing, but it must be borne in mind that nearly all the corps of this district are composed of country settlers, who can ill afford the time necessary for this purpose.

There are, however, some very good shots amongst them, and much interest is evinced in rifle practice generally. For the District Prizes there were 302 competitors, and all the prizes (18) allotted, were won.

On reference to the attached *Gazette*, it will be seen in the 9th set of Colonial Prizes, that three of the ten representatives of the North Island were furnished from Wellington, of whom two were second and third highest scorers; and that the district also won more money prizes than any other in the North Island.

Greytown.

There are three corps—one Cavalry, and two Rifle. The Greytown Cavalry have improved much in number and general appearance since last year, and have shown a disposition to make themselves acquainted with their drill.

I cannot speak so favourably of the Greytown Rifles, who are not so good as last year. I was informed, however, that several of its most zealous members have lately joined the cavalry.

The Featherston Company mustered well, and drilled more steadily than last year.

Masterton.

This district also has one Cavalry and two Rifle corps. The Wairarapa Troop are very good; but in consequence of the severe weather, they could not muster in such numbers as usual.

The Masterton and Carterton Companies drilled silently and well, especially the latter.

Corporal Bassett, of the Carterton Company, was again the best shot of the Province, and has won the medal two years consecutively. In both these districts there appears to be a good spirit; and though the occupations of the settlers prevent their devoting time for class-firing, they are otherwise interested in their general progress.

NAPIER.

This district contains one Cavalry, one Artillery, two Rifle, and one Cadet corps. Owing to the heavy floods, I was unable to inspect the Wairoa Company; but Major Withers reports them as attentive; and in consequence of the exposed position of the settlement, they have lately been armed with the Snider rifle.

The Hawke's Bay Cavalry are not numerous, but are a useful corps, having on several occasions volunteered for active service. Many members live at some distance from town, and, as the drill is conducted by the Commanding Officer of the troop, without the assistance of a drill-instructor, much credit is due to him for their state.

The Artillery are comparatively a newly-raised corps, and have felt the want of a thoroughly competent instructor, who is not easily supplied in the Colony for this branch of the service. They have shown a disposition to learn their duties, and, considering the above disadvantages, have made fair progress; but their firing was not very good.

The Napier Rifle Company has improved in appearance and drill. Several went through class-firing, and one member was qualified to represent his district at Auckland.

The Cadet Corps is quite new, but from the manner in which the preliminary exercises of extension motions, facings, &c., were performed, I think there is every chance of its being a success.