

CAVALRY COLONIAL PRIZES.

In proportion to their strength, five representatives were allowed for Cavalry Volunteers, and one from the mounted portion of the Armed Constabulary, to compete for the Cavalry Championship and other prizes. These representatives were selected by a competition on the ranges of the several corps, at which 182 men attended, and of this number 18 attained the minimum number of points (*vide* Table No. 15). One extra man attended the meeting at Christchurch, at his own expense, thus making a total of seven competitors. The Cavalry Championship was decided by the highest aggregate score in four matches (*vide* Table 21).

The Cavalry Champion Belt was won by Sergeant Cummins of the Wanganui Cavalry Volunteers, after a close contest amongst the four highest scorers.

On the whole the shooting at the Colonial Prize Firing was very good indeed, showing an improvement on many of the matches of last year.

We were fortunate in being able to secure a good range within a few miles of the town, which was kindly placed at the disposal of the Government by Major Cracroft Wilson, C.B.

Lieut.-Colonels Packe and Cargill, with Majors Stapp and Atkinson, attended the meeting, and rendered every possible assistance during the firing.

All matters under dispute were referred to them, and I have much reason to be thankful for the ready assistance which they invariably afforded me.

I cannot conclude this report of the Colonial Prize Firing without bringing to your notice the invaluable services rendered by Mr. Stevens. The great care and attention in the performance of his duties were conspicuous throughout, and formed the subject of remark from all the representatives.

In the annual report of Colonel Cargill, he strongly recommends that the representatives shall for the future be encamped during the Colonial Prize Firing, and that the corps in the vicinity of the meeting shall be invited to attend, and all have an opportunity of being instructed in camp duties. I think the suggestion is worthy of consideration, but the success would in a great measure depend upon the number of Volunteers who were sufficiently near the place of meeting to be able to join the camp. It is doubtful, however, whether the representatives themselves would be willing to participate in many of the duties connected with camp life, such as guards, picquets, &c., as they would be competing in matches during the day, and night work in addition would necessarily tend to deteriorate their shooting.

I am of opinion that putting the representatives under canvas would be advantageous in many ways, and be less expensive than giving them detention money.

GENERAL PRIZES.

Cavalry.

A sum of £100 was set apart for a series of twenty prizes to be competed for by the Cavalry Volunteers throughout the Colony, each corps firing on its own range. For these prizes 182 competed, the highest scorer being Volunteer Huntley, of Canterbury. By reference to Tables 24 to 26 it will be seen that the Rangitikei District won nearly half the prizes, the highest average score being made by Waiuku.

The firing may be considered good, when the imperfect state of the breech-loading carbines now on issue is taken into consideration.

Artillery.

Prizes were apportioned to the several Artillery corps as last year, and were competed for in their several districts.

Cadets.

Last year several Cadet representatives attended at the place nominated for Colonial Prize Firing, but it was found unadvisable to continue this system, as the boys were in many instances compelled to be absent from their homes for too long a time. It was therefore arranged that each corps should compete for the prizes in its own district.

There were three sets of prizes,—1st, for boys under 14 years old; 2nd, for boys above 14 years old; 3rd, for boys between 12 and 17 years of age.

The Cadet Championship was decided by the highest aggregate scorer in the 1st and 3rd, or 2nd and 3rd sets respectively. The winner of the Cadet Champion Belt was Lieut. Slight, Masterton Cadets, Rangitikei, who made 38 points in 2nd set; 55 points in 3rd set; making a total of 93 points out of a possible maximum of 100, which is an extraordinary score for a lad of his age (*vide* Table 27).

There were 601 competitors in the two sets provided for the boys according to their respective ages, and of this number 161 again competed for the prizes set apart for Cadets of all ages.

The attached Tables 27, 28, 29, show the scores of the prize winners in each set, the distribution of the prizes, and the total number of competitors in each district, with their scores and averages. On the whole the firing may be considered very good.

The highest aggregate scorer amongst the boys under 14 years of age was Cadet Ellerm, of the Hutt, age 13, who made 83 points out of a possible 100 (*vide* Table 27).

The arms on issue to Cadets are of a mixed description, of which 800 are muzzle-loading carbines lately from England; the remainder being made up of short and medium Enfield rifles and old-pattern carbines.

DISTRICT PRIZES.

In addition to the Armed Constabulary sending representatives to the Colonial Prize Firing at Christchurch, a sum of £150 was set apart for competition by that force with Snider rifles, in lieu of taking part in the District Prize Firing.

The districts were arranged nearly the same as last year, the amount of prizes for each being apportioned in the same ratio as the number of representatives for the Colonial matches.