

The fourth and fifth highest scorers in the competition for the championship also belong to this Province—viz., Sergeant Taylor and Lieutenant Muir.

No less than seventeen representatives were furnished for the Colonial Prize Firing from Otago, who won forty prizes, representing half the money offered for competition.

During my inspection the town corps frequently expressed a hope that the Government would assist them in providing a drill-shed to enable them to attend parades in bad weather, and at night, when the best musters can be obtained during the winter months.

COUNTY OF WESTLAND.

In this district are three Rifle corps, comprising 190 members, of whom 146 qualified for capitation. They are in very fair order, and are much interested in rifle practice. Half their efficient members attended class-firing with very good results, and three representatives were furnished to the Colonial Prize Firing out of five who had qualified.

CADETS.

I am pleased to be able to report that a satisfactory improvement has taken place throughout the Colony amongst the Cadets, and particularly in the North Island, where they have increased from 177 on 1st April, 1871, to 1,004 on 31st March, 1872; the total increase in the Colony during that period being about 720.

These figures do not include a large number of boys now undergoing a course of preliminary training in the various schools, who are not old enough to join the ranks of Cadet corps.

On reference to Table C, it will be seen that the principal increase has been in Auckland, where, prior to the Colonial Prize Firing of 1871, not a single corps existed. There are now 454 Cadets, and at my late inspection I found they had made very great progress.

When visiting several of the schools throughout the Colony, the masters expressed themselves much gratified with the beneficial results of the training of the boys, which imparted habits of obedience and discipline not previously attained. This is especially apparent in the town schools, where larger numbers are under training, and consequently greater emulation exists.

I may here observe that the great interest displayed by the masters of the several schools in which corps are formed, has, in a very great measure, been conducive to the success attending the Cadet movement.

Great patience and energy is required in teaching boys their drill, when so many changes necessarily take place in Cadet corps, and the progress developed reflects the more credit on their instructors.

These remarks, however, are scarcely applicable to Nelson or Christchurch, where, on reference to Table C, it will be seen that the numbers are small in proportion to the population, and have even decreased during the last year more than in other parts of the Colony.

In addition to the corps in connection with schools, there are several attached to adult Volunteer corps, which are making fair progress, but greater difficulty is experienced in enforcing regular attendance than with school corps.

This is not surprising, as the officers of the adult corps cannot be expected to have the same direct influence over the boys as their schoolmasters, and, moreover, owing to their various employments, it is more difficult to arrange times of meeting that are equally suitable to all.

A reference to Table C will show the numbers enrolled, the increase and decrease in the several districts, and the numbers who have earned capitation during the past year.

The annual allowance of 20s. is scarcely sufficient to pay for the clothing, yet, with very few exceptions, I found nearly all the Cadets provided with uniforms.

In my last report I mentioned that the number of drills for the qualification of Cadets for capitation was not sufficient, but the number of drills attended by boys in town corps is generally very much in excess of the compulsory number required by the regulations.

The few lads composing the country corps have neither the time nor opportunity to attend as regularly as those in the towns, and consequently cannot be expected to show the same proficiency and smartness. As a rule, however, they are particularly eager to become good shots; and it is worthy of remark that the Rangitikei District, which is only represented by sixty-four Cadets, won more money prizes at the recent competition than any other in the Colony, and, moreover, had the honor of possessing the winner of the Cadet Champion Belt amongst their number (*vide* Tables 27 and 28). Since last year, 800 muzzle-loading carbines have been received from England, and distributed throughout the Colony, which has greatly tended to increase the enthusiasm of the Cadets.

As this number was not sufficient to complete the arming of all, a *pro rata* distribution took place, and the carbines were issued in the several districts to those boys who showed the most attention to their drill, producing a spirit of emulation for the possession of these arms. Special instructions have been issued to Commanding Officers of districts to pay particular attention to setting-up drill before arms are placed in the boys' hands, in order that their carriage and physical condition may be generally improved.

I may here observe that, on visiting the High School at Dunedin, I found the boys had the advantage of a gymnasium, fitted up with all kinds of appliances necessary for gymnastics, and also had the services of a very efficient instructor. The boys were very expert in many of their exercises, and it must be of the greatest possible benefit to them. The Head Master informed me that the whole expenses were borne by the school, and expressed a hope that the Government would assist to remunerate the instructor.

Without doubt such a course of gymnastics would be most beneficial to all Cadets, but it could only be carried out in the larger towns.