

PRIZE FIRING.

The prizes offered by the General Government for 1872 were divided into three Classes, viz. :—

Colonial Prizes.

- (1.) By representatives from the Militia, adult Volunteer corps (except Cavalry), and the Armed Constabulary; (2.) By representatives from Cavalry Volunteers and the mounted portion of the Armed Constabulary; (3.) By all comers.

General Prizes.

To be competed for by the under-mentioned Forces in their own Districts, viz. :—

- (1.) By Cavalry Volunteers; (2.) By Artillery Volunteers (Ordnance); (3.) By Cadet Volunteers; (4.) By the Armed Constabulary (under regulations issued by Commissioner.)

District Prizes.

To be competed for by Militia and Volunteers, in their own Districts.

It was found expedient to have the Cavalry and Infantry competitors quite distinct, as the two branches are armed with a different class of weapon; and this year, for the first time, a championship for Cavalry was instituted, in addition to that of Infantry.

INFANTRY COLONIAL PRIZES.

The representatives from the various districts were selected—

- (1.) By the several corps selecting their own company representatives in proportion to their strength; (2.) By the company representatives competing in two stages for choice of representatives at Colonial Prize Firing.

In proportion to the strength of Militia and Volunteers, the North Island was allowed 39 representatives, South 21, Armed Constabulary 3,—making a total of 63.

In some districts no competitors made the requisite number of points to become representatives, whilst in others there was an excess of qualified men. These were permitted to fill the vacancies.

Thus, whilst Otago was allowed 11, and sent 17, Auckland was allowed 8, but only sent 1. Finally the North Island furnished 23 representatives; South Island, 31; Armed Constabulary, 4.

By Table 1 it will be seen that 315 men were selected from the several companies to compete for choice of Colonial representatives, and the average of points obtained was 30 per cent. higher than in any previous year. The meeting took place in April, at Christchurch. A reference to Tables 1 to 23 will show the results of the firing for prizes.

The Championship was decided by the highest aggregate score made in eight matches (*vide* attached Table No. 11). Captain Wales, City Guards Company, Otago Rifle Volunteers, the Champion of 1871, again carried off the Champion Belt, which he now is entitled to retain permanently, having won it two years consecutively. This was the first Champion Belt presented to the New Zealand Volunteers for competition, and has been won as follows :—

1861	...	Lieutenant Brighton	...	...	Auckland.
1862	...	Volunteer Hoult	...	...	Nelson.
1863	...	Volunteer Morse	...	...	Nelson.
1864	...	Lieutenant Owen	...	...	Wanganui.
1865	...	No competition.			
1866	...	Corporal Christie	...	...	Otago.
1867	...	Corporal Chisholm	...	...	Otago.
1868	...	Sergeant Taylor	...	...	Otago.
1869	...	No competition.			
1870	...	Lieutenant Goldie	...	...	Otago.
1871	...	Captain Wales	...	...	Otago.
1872	...	Captain Wales	...	...	Otago.

The Annual Match between the North and South Islands resulted, after a keen contest, in a victory for the South by 19 points (*vide* Table 13).

The Challenge Cup, which is held by the highest scorer of the winning team, is now in possession of Volunteer Cowie, of Otago, and eight of the ten Snider rifles presented to the winning team were also won by Otago representatives.

An extra match was instituted this year for all the representatives who had become marksmen in the class-firing of the preceding year, when 47 out of 63 representatives competed, proving conclusively by this large proportion the great advantage to be derived from a steady course of class-firing. The winner of 1st prize in this match was Volunteer Fenton, of the Thames (*vide* Table 12).

There were also two matches for All Comers, with any description of rifle, the first at 100 and 200 yards, the second at 500 and 600 yards. The 1st prize in first match was won by Volunteer Cowie, of Otago, with a medium Enfield rifle. The 1st prize in second match was won by Mr. McKerrel, of the London Scottish Rifle Volunteers, with an Ingram rifle. This gentleman was travelling through the Colony at the time of the meeting, and was one of the Scottish team that competed for the International Enfield Trophy at Wimbledon, in 1868.

I think it worthy of note that, on reference to Table 23, it will be seen that Humphries, of the Taranaki Militia, was only 2 points behind Mr. McKerrel, having fired the match with a Martini-Henry; and Kelly, Armed Constabulary, tied Humphries (after allowance of points) with a Medium Enfield rifle.

Table 14 is an analysis of the Colonial Prize Firing, showing the division of the money prizes, by which it appears that the Province of Otago won nearly half the amount offered for competition by Infantry representatives.