

Table 32 shows the number of competitors, with their scores and averages in each district, as well as the average score for the last five years.

The number of competitors was 1,388, showing an apparent reduction in the number since last year. This is not really the case; as, owing to the release of many Militia districts in the North Island, few of that force competed; and, again, the Cavalry Volunteers fired for special prizes instead of these.

In order that the best shots in each district might not be able to carry off all the prizes, the regulations this year provided that the Colonial Representatives should not be permitted to fire for District Prizes at all; and, again, two sets of prizes were formed, competitors being allowed to enter for one only.

CLASS FIRING.

Table E shows the result of the class-firing, by which it will be seen that a more general interest has been evinced throughout the Colony in this important duty.

In the North Island several corps in the districts of Auckland, Waikato, Wanganui, Tauranga, and Thames, have attended a course for the first time; the total number being 622, representing twenty-four corps, against 324, representing ten corps last year. By reference to Table E, it will be seen that a considerable improvement has taken place in the final classification. The Thames shows the greatest number in North Island attending the course, as also an improvement in final classification. Out of 264, only 56 remained in 3rd class, whilst 99 reached 1st class, of whom 58 became marksmen.

In the South Island, although the number attending has slightly decreased, yet the number of marksmen and 1st class shots is greater than last year. Almost the entire number, however, are in Otago, which Province continues to show a great improvement. By reference to Table E, it will be seen that out of 611 attending class-firing, only 75 remained in the 3rd class, whilst 377 reached the 1st class, of whom 224 gained marksmen's badges.

The Adjutant reports that, in the Dunedin Battalion, six members made more points in the first two classes than the highest scorer last year,—Captain Jamieson, of the Scottish Rifles, being the best battalion shot, with 119 points, in the 2nd and 1st classes.

The East Taieri Company is again the best shooting company in the Colony; thirty-six of its members, out of a strength of forty, have attended a course of class-firing; the whole number passed into the 1st class, and thirty-three became marksmen. This is the more creditable, as the course is not compulsory.

ARMS.

The breech-loading carbines on issue to the Cavalry are in a very bad state generally, as reported last year. Five hundred Snider carbines have been ordered from England, but have not yet arrived. The Enfield rifles on issue to the Infantry corps, with few exceptions, are in indifferent order, having been in use for a long time. The grooving of the barrels is becoming much worn, and this will increase with shooting until the arms are altogether unserviceable. I think it my duty to call your particular attention to this matter, as the manufacture of Enfield rifles and ammunition is decreasing in England, and if our present stock of arms is not gradually replaced by others, the expenditure necessary for re-arming the force will at some future time be very great.

CLOTHING.

All corps are now provided with uniforms. A large proportion of those in the North Island have adopted the Nelson cloth, whilst others have preferred to supply themselves with cloth purchased with their capitation allowance from private firms. I believe that the Mosgiel cloth, which is manufactured in Otago, is likely to be used by many of the corps in that Province. The Cadets, with few exceptions, are supplied with blue or red serge suits, but the present amount of capitation is not sufficient to provide uniforms without the assistance of the parents of the boys.

TARGETS.

The want of targets has been much felt in many districts. A supply has been ordered from England, which has not yet arrived. Some targets for immediate use were manufactured in the Colony, but after trial they have been found far inferior to those made in England.

CAPITATION.

Table D shows the number of adult Volunteers enrolled on 31st March, 1872, also the number who became efficient during the Volunteer year ending at that date, to be—

				Enrolled.	Efficients.	Percentage.
North Island	...	...	...	4,038	3,584	88
South Island	...	...	...	2,004	1,517	75
				6,042	5,101	

Table C shows the number of Cadets enrolled, and efficiencies for the same period, to be—

				Enrolled.	Efficients.	Percentage.
North Island	...	...	...	1,004	866	86
South Island	...	...	...	439	356	81
				1,443	1,222	

Thus in the Colony 81 per cent. of adult Volunteers, and 83 per cent. of Cadets, earned capitation allowance during the past year, which shows an increase over preceding years.