

CANADA'S WAR PRISON

OLD FORT HENRY IS A BUSY PLACE THESE DAYS.

Once Impregnable Stronghold Has Been Reduced to the Task of Confining Germans and Austrians Who Are Considered Dangerous—The Inmates Mostly Play Football Between Waking and Sleeping.

On the crest of a bald slope across the harbor from the City of Kingston, Canada, is an old-fashioned box of limestone and cement that for the last seventy-five years has borne the title of "Fort Henry." It is one of the proud old line of "impregnable" places, of the generation of wooden frigates and muzzle-loading cannon, full of superstitious gossip and weird tradition—all that, and a garrison of one soldier who pulls the string on a big brute of a cannon every night to tell the town's folk it is nine-and-thirty, writes Robson Black in *The Star Weekly*.

Fort Henry has come into its own these days. After waiting three-quarters of a century for some intrepid United Stateser to so much as aim a peashooter at its walls, it commenced in August, 1914, to pay some slight dividend on its capital investment of four million good British dollars.

Two hundred German and Austrian reservists are now coralled inside a set of gates that had to be dug clear of shale to enable them to close. One hundred and sixty-five officers and men of the Princess of Wales Own Rifles "man the ramparts," fully armed, ready for the grimmest of all businesses. Sentries pace against the grey old skyline, and guards are "relieved" and challenges are delivered much as in the gone days, when Count Frontenac parleyed or perforated the Indian tribes that barred his ambitions.

These two hundred King's prisoners are just about as happy a lot of fellows as can be found off a battlefield. Most of them seemed totally delighted when apprehended as abettors of the enemy and locked up in a fine big playground. They have all the benefits of a good summer hotel, "excellent cuisine," beautiful view, music with meals, and are never insulted with a board bill.

More than that, those who are willing to work are given employment as carpenters, masons, laborers, etc., and paid by the Canadian Government at very reasonable wages. The old fort which has shed the rains and winds since 1830, begins to show punctures in the wooden rafters and dry-rot in the window sashes; therefore new rafters and new sashes are necessary. Then, too, the Government anticipates a few hundred more guests and fresh rooms have to be prepared. There is a suggestion in official quarters that the Canadian forts be employed for herding German and Austrian prisoners from the scene of conflict, and this may easily be carried into effect.

But there are a good many of the Fort Henry population too surprised or too mulish to do day labor, and to impress upon such persons the never-ending magnanimity of the British people in time of war, they are allowed to devote their prison hours to amusement. Footballs were even provided, and Germany and Austria elbow and shunt each other at a pleasant hour of soccer. Some days the Kaiserists make it six to two, and other days the Josephesians score a whitewash.

Meal time brings the prisoners of war exactly the same rations as the military guards. Doctors examine and dispense among them without discrimination. The water they swallow is microscopically diagnosed and sanitary perfection has been provided to the uttermost. So does Canada pave the path for two hundred sets of naturalization papers some fine day when "William, the Weed" is stripped of his halo in the van of a retreating army.

The Kaiser's confidence in the world-wide patriotism of the German people would be sadly shaken if he knew that the Canadian Government has allowed thousands of German prisoners their liberty on parole and nearly all have been glad to seize any such technicality as a shelter from their military oaths.

The Austrian prisoners-of-war in Canada are mostly laborers and sailors, relieved from duty on British vessels and turned adrift. Naturally they headed for the United States border on the advice of their consuls and the secret agents who still, undoubtedly, infest the country. The Germans include a few army officers and several whose actions identified them as spies beyond question. The German majority, however, are sailors, but of the class occupying good positions, such as engineers and stewards. In point of daily conduct and disposition, the officers in charge at Fort Henry have no complaints against their wards, who are described as "a happy, contented, and clean-living lot of men."