

FUGITIVE ENEMIES CAUGHT BY WOLVES

Tales of Kapuskasing are Reminiscent of Siberia—Col. Royce Describes Camp.

Four Turks interned in Kapuskasing defied the terrors of the Canadian wilderness and escaped from the camp. Guards on snowshoes trailed the fugitives and found where one had been drowned attempting to cross one of the frozen rivers of the north. Further on, they came upon the scene of a horrible tragedy. Wolves had caught the other three and killed them.

This story was brought down to Toronto by guards who are joining overseas battalions. Of the truth in it, Lieut.-Col. George C. Royce, who has just returned from Kapuskasing, is skeptical. The Star took it to him to-day, and he said:

"It is possible the Turks may have fled and died of exposure, and so the wolves got them. But I don't think there is anything in it."

It sounds very much like Siberia. But Lieut.-Col. Royce says there is nothing in Kapuskasing like Siberia except the climate. He is returning as commandant to the great camp next Tuesday with a staff of officers and men.

"The camp is 80 miles north of Cochrane," said he. "It is on the main line of the C. P. R., and a townsite is laid out and called McPherson. But except for a very few squatters scattered far apart, the place is just one immense forest and typical northern wilderness, with the great military camp in the heart of it. There are over 1,400 alien enemy prisoners, and a military guard of 200 in all. Sixteen of the non-commissioned officers have their families in the camp."

"Is it like a prison?" asked The Star.

"Not at all," replied Lieut.-Col. Royce. "The prisoners are togged out in regular lumbermen's outfits. Their quarters are cosy and their food excellent. Scores of them would not leave Kapuskasing, even if we offered to send them back to civilization, that is, while war is on. They are comfortable and happy, and have their work, for which they are paid at a modest rate. The stories of run-aways you hear are the cases of ignorant Austrians and Bulgarians who are lazy and who are interned for exactly the reason that they are ugly-tempered and disorderly."

"The work that these 1,400 are doing is in clearing the land and building roads chiefly. For this camp they are now in is presently to be an immense experimental farm. Just now they are building bunk-houses, and they have just finished the school house."

"Who for?" asked The Star.

"For the soldiers' children and the children of the squatters. We are also building a road bridge over the Kapuskasing River."

Lieut.-Col. Royce, as an engineer and business man, as well as a soldier, is admirably suited to this post. He is taking up a staff of about a dozen new officers, as the present staff are anxious to enlist in overseas battalions after a year of the wilderness.

Soldiers who have just returned from Kapuskasing have told The Star that the place is very much like what they know of Siberia. The low, snow-covered camp, with the thousand prisoners, and the fur-clad soldiers stamping about in the bitter cold. The great black forest surrounding the huddled cabins. The lonely bugles, the little guards of soldiers marching in the snow. And the wolves that come out of the black forest to creep like grey ghosts on the rim of fields.

These men love the work. It has more romance in it than any military duty but overseas. A gang of fifty of the prisoners are sent out to work under one guard. The guards and patrols go on snowshoes. Whenever a man is missed, a squad of soldiers set out on the grim chase, dressed like the old coureurs du bois. Kapuskasing, in fact, is not unlike the old outposts of the Canadian West, when the Mounted Police were the first carriers of the law.