

500 MAY BE DEATH TOLL FROM NEW ONTARIO FIRE

That Is the Minimum Figure, According to Estimates Made in the North Country—Whole Settlements Were Wiped Out by Flames.

Special to The Star.

Haileybury, Ont., Aug. 1.—The terrible toll of life taken by the fire-demon in the country between Ramore and Cochrane grows in magnitude every hour, and there is no hope or belief that even five hundred will be the limit, although the exact number will never be known. When whole settlements are wiped off the face of the map and reports come in that there are only eight survivors from a thriving settlement of 208 people; when one hears of a hundred and thirty bodies being buried in a morning, charred beyond all recognition; of fifty-seven bodies found in a railway cut; of twenty-four bodies in a root house; of sixteen found in a pit—one realizes that it is impossible to estimate the numbers, and that for every one found near the railway line by relief workers who went up, there may be a dozen lying dead among the ashes that spread for hundreds of square miles over Northern Ontario. And because there has been such a holocaust it is equally impossible to get a list of names of the dead.

That, too, will never be known, for the flames ate up every means of

identification and so scattered were the settlements in some parts that even where one member of a family escaped, he or she could not give the names of neighbors, nor know what became of them except in rare instances. And so the relief workers who went up from North Bay, Cobalt, Haileybury, New Liskeard, and other places, and who found bodies lying in every direction, could do nothing but dig deep trenches and put the remains in them, unrecognised and unrecognizable, while others searched along the creeks or by the walls for wounded who might yet have survived. They were pitifully few and the first train that got back here last night only brought in forty-three passengers, of whom three women and seventeen men were terribly burned, and the remainder women and children who were refugees.

At Nushka fifty-six dead bodies of men, women and children had been found lying in the bottom of a clay cut in the railway, where they had hoped to find shelter from the flames. All the bodies were horribly burned and blackened. Some were minus legs and arms. Just the little bones of one child had been found. In the rear of a barn on the property of the Ontario Provincial Experimental Farm near Matheson 65 bodies had been buried that morning. Again in a trench near the lake 25 scorched and charred remains had found a resting place.