

MEN AT KAPUSKASING NOT FITTED FOR TASK

Those Adapted to Pioneer Work Made Good, Declares Howard Ferguson.

WHY OTHERS FAILED

Some Avoided Doing the Requirements and Preferred Immediate Profits.

"I think you have got to the root of the difficulty; your trip has demonstrated the success of the enterprise," said Hon. G. H. Ferguson today to The Star, in discussing some of the complaints and criticisms made by certain settlers at the Soldiers' Colony at Kapuskasing.

"Has it not proved that where there is failure it is the fault of the individual and not of the system?" he asked.

"There are ten or twelve men there who should never have been permitted to stay," continued the ex-Minister of Lands and Forests.

"None of them have any ground for complaints for having been kept up there, because the conditions were fully explained to them in every case and they were warned that there were certain hardships ahead of them for awhile. They were given the opportunity of trying it out for a time, and at any time within a year and a half their transportation was ready for them to come back. In the meantime they had been paid wages for all the work they had done on the farms or around the colony."

The Favoritism Charges.

"Some of the men complain that there has been discrimination and favoritism regarding employment on Government work on the colony; what have you to say as to that?" asked The Star.

"Mr. Sheppard, the superintendent, is looked upon as one of the most capable men that could be found for the position; he is thoroughly conversant with northern conditions, and that is a matter entirely under his control," was the reply.

In connection with the claim of several settlers that their pulpwood was too small for market purposes, Mr. Ferguson declared that the men were given choice of their lots. "My own recollection is that we told these men, who were not sufficiently experienced in bush work and who thought their pulpwood was too scattered to make money out of it, that they could have permits for cutting pulpwood elsewhere without payment of any Government dues."

Good For Farming.

Replying to the charge that the land would never be suitable for agriculture, Mr. Ferguson stated that at the Dominion Farm adjoining the colony, a silo is filled with 160 tons of corn ensilage that has been grown there this year. "Every variety of grain grown there has been grown immediately opposite the colony centre at the back of the river. Year after year on the site of the Dominion Internment camp there have been the finest vegetable gardens to be seen anywhere. Two years ago, at Hearst, 70 miles west of Kapuskasing where there is not half the quantity of land cleared, I saw as fine corn grown as anywhere in Ontario."

Mr. Ferguson declared that even in many parts of Old Ontario could be found men who had not been able to make a success of their farms in forty years.

"If a man is not adapted to the business he should not stay at it. Our experience proves that the Kapuskasing climate is most healthy, because it is high, dry and bracing, and the fact that there have been only two deaths there in three years among 300 or 400 people, is evidence of this."

"That is a purely local matter," said the ex-Minister, when questioned about alleged overcharges at the colony store, and in regard to complaints that many settlers often could not get oatmeal, meat and other necessaries. "All I do know is that if the provisions are not there, it is either the fault of the storekeeper, or due to delay in shipment, because his instructions were to keep full lines of supplies, ample to meet requirements, and to sell them to our colonists at cost."

In connection with the statement of Mr. Brown, the assistant store manager, that he had dumped carloads of bad meat and boxes of fish into the river, Mr. Ferguson said: "If anything of that kind occurred, it was Brown's duty to make it known. He is one of the men in charge of the store."

"One of the chief difficulties at the settlement is that a number of settlers were tradesmen, including carpenters, who insisted on being given carpentry work, and entirely neglected the clearing of their lots. Because the time came when we had to tell them they must make some reasonable attempt to comply with conditions of the settlement and clear up their lots, they protested and we had unreasonable complaints."

A typographical error occurred in Saturday's edition.

Mr. Brown is quoted as saying that Deputy Minister Griggs told him the store made a profit of \$20,000 last year. It should have read "\$2,000."