

An Ontario Settlement Experiment

SOLDIERS' group settlement in Kapuskasing, Northern Ontario, has been a comparative failure due to mismanagement. A commission of investigation appointed by the provincial government there, discloses that while for over a year conditions were bad nothing was done by the responsible authorities to improve them.

As originated by the government the scheme allowed grants of free land to soldier settlers. Loans for clearing, for building houses and for buying livestock were made. Roads were built and certain public services provided. The location of the settlement where the National Transcontinental railway crosses the Kapuskasing River was considered favorable. The land was good as the interned aliens, maintained there during the war, had demonstrated. Yet the group settlement was not the success it should have been.

The reasons are various but the chief appears to have been that of mismanagement. Also the settlers were led to believe that in winter they could get out spruce for woodpulp. It was discovered, however, too late, that the spruce in the neighborhood was not suitable for pulpwood and this handicapped the colony from the beginning. Cost of clearing was so high that unless some money could be made from pulpwood the men could hardly "carry on." They were compelled to expend their capital too quickly and so failed to become economically self-supporting.

It is expected that the settlement will be re-organized for it is realized that with expert management it may still succeed. Those familiar with the area which it is sought to populate, assert that only organized communities can make a success of pioneering there. The principle of group settlement is sound, they hold; the fault lies in the application.