

WAR PRISONERS INTERINED IN CAMP IN CANADA'S NORTH ENJOY GOOD TIMES

Two Detention Camps are Located on the Transcontinental Railway Line East and West of the Town of Cochrane.

GREATEST LATITUDE PERMITTED PRISONERS

G. G. B. G. and 48th Highlanders of Toronto, Guarding Prisoners, Have Fine Opportunity of Practicing Marksmanship.

The Transcontinental Railways' first duty has been far from the peaceful traffic routine dreamed of by its projectors. Indeed it has been the opposite—that of carrying into the northern limits of Ontario the Canadian prisoners of war, even before its formal opening.

The Austrian prisoners were carefully guarded by our boys in khaki, loaded rifles and bayonets affixed, and at stops it was with wide-eyed wonder the descendant of the Redmen gazed on this spectacle—these children of the wilderness who half a decade ago, saw naught but their own peoples.

Detention Camp.

The selection of the detention camps by the Government was well inspired—escape is almost impossible—a wilderness almost rivalling Siberia and only broken by an occasional settlers shack or wayside section house. When the weather man plays hide and seek with mercury 60 to 65 below zero, one may well realize the futility of escape through the regions of this new land. At present there are two camps—one at Kapuskasing River, 70 miles west of Cochrane, and another at Spirit Lake, 137 miles east of Cochrane, the railway running through dense bush and no settlements for stops. A weekly train—a contractor at that—is the mode of transportation while a deep snow covers the unlimited acreage.

Should a foolhardy attempt at escape be made, the perpetrator would surely drop from exhaustion by the wayside before even the closest shelter could be sought. And then admitting the improbable possible and an attempt made for freedom, a phone message to Cochrane would be awaiting the fugitives arrival—re-arrest being immediately made, as it is only through Cochrane exit to the South is possible.

The Country.

Farms galore this country surely has and by the selection of this locality for detention camps the Government has done much to advertise it for future occupation as farm land. This densely treed, flat land will, when cleared, make splendid agricultural land—and be the centre of fine transportation facilities—railway and river.

The Prisoners.

While civilians were prohibited from entering the military guarded cars, a peep could be obtained through the windows at the men and a fine sturdy lot they appeared.

Food in abundance was supplied the men throughout the journey and content was manifest. During wakeful hours they whiled the time at games of various nature and swapped jokes and stories between songs. Tobacco being plentiful, smoking was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The Guards.

The soldier boys had "turns" of four hours "off" and two hours "on" during the latter time, standing "at guard" on either front or rear platform, bayonets and cartridge ready for emergencies.

The unique experience of guarding these "legal prisoners" fell to the lot of the 48th Highlanders and their interest was much aroused on learning that the moose, bear, martin, fox and other animals—some heard of, but never seen—still roamed throughout this wilderness.

Location of Camp.

The camp was selected by J. G. Whitson, Com. for Roads, Ontario; Mr. Grisdale, Supt. Dom. Experimental Farms and Albert Stewart, Pioneer North Country Explorer.

It contains about 1800 acres of what is pronounced to be the very finest land in the north country for agricultural purposes, and the Kapuskasing River flows exactly between the two points enclosed by the Ground Hog and Opazataka rivers.

It is probable indeed that some of its present enforced inhabitants may become so filled with the enthusiasm of their environment as to later permanently settle.

Prisoners' Work.

Buildings for bunk houses, etc., have already been rushed to completion, the "citizens of town", materially aiding in their construction.

Their quarters are warm and comfortable; plenty of good food to eat, and they enjoy privileges many "out of works" would prefer to their own desolate existence.

Enjoy Freedom.

Freedom of movement is enjoyed by all the prisoners—no soldier stands over them, gun laden, to enforce unnecessary restrictions and a rough courtesy is everywhere evident. Inter-communication between themselves is allowed and in the matter of surveillance the greatest latitude is shown.