

# ALIENS IN CAMP TO START COLONY

When War Ends Austrians at  
Spirit Lake Will Become  
Farmers

MET BY ARCTIC WEATHER

Thermometer Went to 53 Be-  
low Zero, but Prisoners All  
Healthy and Enjoying  
Their Work

"There are 765 enemy alien prisoners now interned at the Spirit Lake Camp, under Lt.-Col. W. Rodden, of whom all are Austrians except two Germans and one Turk," said Capt. R. A. C. Kane, of the 3rd Victoria Rifles, who returned yesterday from the camp, where he had spent some months as supply officer.

The district had given the men rather a chilly reception. Capt. Kane stated that the weather had at times been decidedly cold, 53 below zero being the coldest recorded, whilst during one frosty spell they had gone ten days when the thermometer could not climb as high as 40 below. When it finally did relax one of the privates came back to barracks with the glad news, declaring "Hurrah, it's getting warm, only 20 below today."

Despite this sharp frost, Capt. Kane said both the soldiers and prisoners at the camp were enjoying their visit to Spirit Lake. The air was very clear and dry, so that the cold was not felt as it would be in Montreal. One result was that the men on duty guarding the camp had to wear goggles of smoked glass, to prevent snow blindness. When he left there it was well below zero, with four feet of snow on the lake.

"No one ever saw a more contented lot of prisoners," remarked Captain Kane. "There was no difficulty about them, and only two of them tried to break away, in fact they all seemed well satisfied to be in quarters there, and forgot that they were prisoners of war. The aliens are put to work clearing the land, and already they have about 75 acres cleaned up, despite the deep snow. The ground is covered with a heavy bush of red pine, balsam and tamarack, and in their clearing up operations the prisoners have already piled up about 700 cords of pulp wood. The prisoners are not worked too hard, but they go to their jobs willingly, and seem to like their life."

## WILL START COLONY.

In fact Capt. Kane said that the prisoners were so enamored of life in the far north that it was certain they would start an Austrian colony around Spirit Lake after the war was ended. A number of the men had already asked for permission to do this, and preparations were being made to that end. Any man wishing to settle there has been promised a grant of 100 acres of land, and those sending in their names now will be able to have their future farm cleared up by the work of the prisoners. Of course, the men will all remain prisoners until the war is ended. Then those who wish to remain as settlers will have to become naturalized British subjects, and take up land in the usual way. It is expected that a considerable number of the thousand prisoners the camp will soon contain will stay there and grow up with the country.

The prisoners are now living in a series of huts, which the first "settlers" built. These are long wooden buildings, fitted up inside with bunks in two storeys, like the inside of a sleeping car, the bunks being made wide so that two men can share each berth, 104 men occupying each hut. While the conditions are a trifle crude so far as plumbing and bathing facilities are concerned, Capt. Kane said the men seemed well contented, while their health was excellent.

Lt.-Col. W. Rodden has about 125 officers and men under his command, as guards for the prisoners of war, but they have a pretty easy time, as the allens give no trouble at all.

The officers with Lt.-Col. Rodden are Lieut. Bernard, A.S.C., Lieut. Gilmore, Major Therrien, Lieut. Sherring, Major Williams, the medical officer, Lieut. Buchan, Lieut. Kennedy, and 125 men. There is a good deal of sport, game birds being fairly plentiful, although they have not been much damaged by the marksmen of the guard. Rabbits, however, said

Capt. Kane, are so common that the men do not shoot them, but bowl them over with sticks, and they help out wonderfully with the rations.