

AN INTERNMENT CAMP.

How Canada's Aliens Are Cared for in the North.

At a certain point in New Ontario the party of newspapermen and railway officials who made the initial trip on the National Express to Winnipeg passed the most flourishing settlement that crossed their vision since the train pulled out of Cochrane on its first run over Canada's new railway. It is not the usual sort of a settlement one meets in the wilderness. It is not a Hudson Bay trading post now, nor is its chief activity the sale of corner lots to strangers. Its form of municipal government is unusual, being organized on the principle of the absolute monarchy, with a ruling class and compulsory labor and all that goes with it.

It is an internment camp, its name is spelled Kapuskasing, but it is not usually pronounced. Most people prefer to know it by the name of the station, Macpherson.

A football game was in progress when the National drew up. A crowd of Austrians and a scattering of red-fez-ed Turks were the spectators. Interest in the game was replaced by the phenomenon of a train formed solely of passenger and express coaches. But none of them offered to approach the tracks, and the passengers who alighted remained close to the train. One of the train party forgot about war regulations and climbed a pile of brick to "snap" the encampment. Before he had his camera focussed a sergeant and several privates in various stages of shocked excitement closed in on him and prevented him from unwittingly committing what is now a serious offence.

The camp consists of a row of tar-papered one-storey shacks, set in the middle of a large clearing. Here approximately a thousand Austrians and Turks are gathered. There are only about a hundred and fifty of the latter, but they cause more trouble than all the rest put together. Their pet foible is to refuse to work. When that happens they are made to work. This system of compulsion, we were told, is a deep, dark secret in which not even the officers of the camp share. Suffice it to say that invariably the Turks do work, sooner or later.

At one time or another a few of the prisoners have escaped from the camp, but none of them enjoyed more than a few hours of freedom. Without exception they have been rounded up and returned to camp Kapuskasing.

Their labor consists of clearing the land. One of the soldiers on duty at the right-of-way outskirts of the camp informed us that nearly two hundred acres had already been cleared. If the war lasts long enough, Macpherson station will find itself the centre of a farming district, potentially one of the richest in Ontario.

After hours the prisoners are given a wide range of freedom to enjoy themselves. They play football, or watch the soldiers play; improvise sports of their own, or go boating on the river in large punts which have been provided for their amusement.

Their diet includes a form of sausages popular among Austrians, sometimes beef, bread, jam and the like. Their rations are as good as those served the soldiers, healthful and satisfying. They are living an out-of-door life and are gaining in knowledge of the wild. When the war is over they will be given first chance to claim for settlement the land they have cleared. Altogether there are worse things than being an alien enemy in a Canadian military internment camp.