

## SETTLEMENT HELD BACK.

### War Has Taken Many Men From Northern Ontario.

The men of Northern Ontario from forest, mine, and farm, who now wear the King's uniform, include the best that old Ontario has sent north for the development of the great mining and agricultural industries. No less than 4,000 men who lived along the line of the T. & N. O. Railway have gone, many of them in construction and pioneer battalions, and many in infantry, artillery, and engineers' units. Recruiting posters, signs of Red Cross activities, men in khaki, who are ready to forsake everything they hold dear, and women engaged in patriotic enterprises are features of every northern Ontario town, whether large or small.

A problem has been presented for the Provincial Government to solve with regard to the enlistment of homesteaders whose three years' term of residence on their land has not been completed. No definite policy along this line has yet been laid down, but it is quite certain that the Government will give consideration for the men who were willing to forsake the plow to take up a rifle. It is anticipated that a regulation providing for the non-cancellation of homesteads, under such circumstances, will be passed by the Legislature.

"The main thing is to mark time, and to keep things going," declared Commissioner George Lee of North Bay. "The north will go ahead by leaps and bounds after the war. It is no detriment to a country for its development to be held up temporarily. The progress that will be made after that period will only be the more marked."

The limit for settlers at present is a point about twelve miles north of Cochrane. The foreigners are found to be fairly industrious settlers. The colony of 100 Danes, who are situated at Sisikinaki Lake, 176 miles north of North Bay, seemed to be in a fairly prosperous condition. Their buildings were quite modern, and their crops promised quite well. A colony of Swedes, that is quite scattered, also seemed to be doing very well, and showed that they are assiduous in the work of clearing their land.

Still the stream of immigration flows in and more land is being taken up. The northern country is not being developed nearly as rapidly as if peace conditions had prevailed, but signs of prosperity are to be seen on all sides. Homesteaders are steadily clearing the land, although the acreage under cultivation this year is not as great as in 1915. This is on account of the enlistment of homesteaders, the scarcity of farm help and the wet fall, which prevented the sowing of fall wheat to some extent.

The figures showing immigration totals for the last three years were given by Mr. Lee. They showed the number of new homesteaders in 1913 to be 938, in contrast to 634 in 1914 and 925 in 1915. With regard to the figures of 1915, Mr. Lee estimated that two-thirds of the settlers brought their wives and families. Closer settlement has meant an increase in social life, and a consequently greater proportion of settlers who are willing to bring their families with them. Schools and churches have been erected, and have been made more accessible by the much greater mileage of highways. A conservative estimate was given by Mr. Lee of the number of settlers who had come into the clay belt this year, when he ventured the opinion that between 400 and 500 had taken up homesteads.

In 1915, he declared, fifty per cent. more clearing had been done than in the two previous years. Along the Elk Lake branch particularly great improvements have been made.