

**Oamaru Mail, Volume XL, Issue 12688, 5. November 1915:**

### **RUSSIA'S FEVER TERRITORY**

Volhynia, into which German outposts near Vladimir Volynsk penetrated, forms the subject of a sketch issued by the National Geographic Society.

"Interposed between the fat lands of the Little Russians in the south and the flourishing metropolis of Kief is a stretch of comparatively poor and undeveloped country included in the Russian Government of Volhynia. There is a poverty and dreary neediness to be found in this country, a lack of development and of primitive organization, such as traveler finds duplicated when off the beaten tracks in the Caucasus. There is thin soil, and swamp, marsh, muddy lakes and forests everywhere. Especially difficult from a military point of view is the northern part of the government, where the water-soggy earth and tangled forests slope into the impassable sloughs of the Pripet swamps. Both Germans and Russians may endeavor to make the same use of this region that von Hindenburg made of the Masuren Lakes."

"Volhynia has 277000 square miles of area. Its north-eastern part is included in the region of Poliessie, spongy land, floating land, and swamp. The southern division of the government, from the Galician borders west of Kief, is roughly hilly and cut by deep river valleys. A broad highland from the Carpathians stretches over this part of the province to Kief and the Dnieper river. The highest points in this hill country reach a height of 1200 feet, while in the west, reaching almost to Kovel, ranges of hills are scattered, reaching heights between 700 and 800 feet."

"The climate in the north is unhealthful, abounding in swamp fevers and mosquitoes. Throughout all the northern parts there are no cities of consequence, no important foundations, and merely a primitive agriculture. The principal cities for the whole government are Zhitomir, the capital, Dubno, Kovel, Vladimir Volynsk, Kremenets, Lutsk, Ostrog, Rovno, Zaslavl, Ovruch, not one of which overreaches the importance of a village. More than half of the country of the north, just to the south, and the east of Brest-Litovsk, is a bewildering maze of dense forest growth, and much of the remaining area is fever swamp and stagnant, sedge-filled lake. The soils in the south are good, but agriculture has been but slightly developed. Some 25 per cent of the land of the south is under tillage."

"In this backward, lean, and ill-favored country, manufacturing industries have hardly obtained a modest foothold. Some sugar and tobacco is manufactured here. There are also a few factories for the output of agricultural machinery, woollen textiles, glass and leather goods. Considerable home industry is carried on in the villages, the fabrication of goods through the time of winter imprisonment, when the only other means for earning a living is the felling and preparing of fuel wood in the dense forests. This home industry produces wood carvings, parquetry, amber carvings, and the making of coarse lace. Many kegs of frozen mushrooms from this region reach the great Lenten markets of Russia every year. Amber is found, and some coal and lignite mined. The export of timber and firewood forms one of the most profitable industries, and one which occupies the peasant during the long inaction would be enforced."

"Little and White Russians form the greatest part of the population of the government, and, in the southern part, there was a large sprinkling of German peasant colonists. The lands of this government have been inhabited by Slavs from remote antiquity. Some of the small towns still battling for existence on their ancient sites were founded in the ninth century. The government is a poor and difficult field for the modern army."