ARCTIC PADRE NOW CHAPLAIN IN ARMY CAMP

Anglican Clergyman Is Serving With Canadian Troops in Old Land

By ALLAN NICKLESON

Somewhere in England, May 22 (CP).—A little man who covered a vast Arctic Anglican diocese by dog team and boat, Rev. H. R. Rokeby-Thomas has undergone more adventure in his thirty-four years than most people find in a lifetime. Now he's in England "on the greatest adventure of all," padre at a Canadian army reinforcement unit camp.

Padre Rokeby-Thomas went to the Arctic in 1934—he was married there two years later—and spent five years preaching the gospel and ministering to the wants of his parishioners—700 Eskimos and 20 whites—over an area of approximately 100,000 square miles. He was posted to St. George's Mission, Cambridge Bay, Victoria Land, after graduation from Wycliffe College in Toronto.

It was a lonely, hard existence with regular visits interrupted occasionally by calls to officiate at burials and marriages among the Netsilik tribe, which the padre termed "the last of the really primitive Eskimos."

After two years of travelling about the diocese with an Eskimo guide, the padre sent for his fiancee, Anna Roszell of Guelph, Ont., and they were married at Coppermine, Northwest Territories, after she travelled to Edmonton by train and flew the remaining 1,200 miles. The padre reached Coppermine on the sturdy Royal Canadian Mounted Police schooner St. Roch, which took seven days to cover the 300-mile stretch through ice floes.

Rt. Rev. A. L. Fleming, Bishop of the Arctic, was scheduled to perform the ceremony, but his ship became ice-bound while he was on a tour. Rokeby-Thomas and his bride were married Aug. 10, 1936, by Canon J. H. Webster of Coppermine, graduate of Emmanuel College at Saskatoon, Sask., then returned to the lonely Arctic wastes on the schooner Aklavik, owned by the Hudson's Bay Company.

They left the mission in 1939 and returned to Ontario by air and train, and the minister was posted to the Diocese of Huron with a pastorate at Walter's Falls, near Owen Sound. He continued there until last September, when he was attached to the Canadian army.

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