

MacKenzie-Byrd - 19 March '33 Past Icy Hazards

SHORTLY before sundown, April 11, 1831 William Lyon MacKenzie took passage from Montreal on the river steamer Waterloo to Quebec to pay a visit to Lower Canada. Passengers and crew numbered upward of fifty persons, six of them being women. The night passed uneventful. The following day the weather turned colder and drift ice filled the river. Pilots came aboard of Dechembault with the information



"MacKenzie . . . lifted her bodily, and carried her over the huge swell . . ."

that the ice at Cap Rouge had gone down and left the river clear. By midnight, they said, they would arrive at Quebec.

At sundown, while still thirty miles above the city, they came dangerously near a great body of ice, and the pilot judged it prudent to turn about and anchor in what was considered a safe place upriver.

The night was cold and clear. Back on the banks the world took a grotesque shape in the increasing darkness. Beneath, black water stretched limitless, giving back the image of the stars. By eleven the passengers were all in bed except MacKenzie, who sat in his cabin reading. At 1 o'clock, just before retiring, he lighted a candle and went around the vessel and found all well. There was no appearance of storm or danger.

An hour later he was awakened by passengers pounding on the cabin door. The ice had come down upon them, driving the ship into the ice field above Cap Rouge, where there was great danger. Persuading them their fears were

to 'er and smilingly asked if she had no questions he might answer. "Only one," she replied. "And what is that?"

"Why do you shoot your political prisoners?"

Stallin, as the story is repeated, caught unawares, remained silent, looked for a moment as if he might take it in bad part, then deciding otherwise, smiled again and, ignoring the question altogether, ushered his visit as out. D.W.B.

groundless, MacKenzie turned over and went to sleep.

Three hours later the aspect was extremely unfavorable. A nip of tremendous force between two gigantic blue-white ice floes set the Waterloo vibrating like a fiddle string before she rose to the pressure.

MacKenzie jumped into his clothes and came on deck. Dawn was blushing the sky. Ice floes rushing seaward with race-horse velocity wedged ice packs through

the channel into corrugated, mountainous upheavals that cracked and groined under the pressure. The din was frightful.

Watching the ice, and taking advantage of every opportunity, the river steamer was squeezed and manoeuvred into spaces of open water until a heavy floe struck the vessel amidships. At the impact the Waterloo reeled and shook, then leaned slightly toward the crowding ice.

For an instant she hung, quivering with the strain, her ribs and braces cracking like muskels, then slowly she began to fill. The passengers jumped over the rail on to the ice and stepping from floe to floe endeavored to make shore, a mile distant Captain Perry, MacKenzie and a few others stood on the ice by the wreck.

As the ship hung perilously on the shelving pack, MacKenzie sought the captain's advice as to the chance of his going down should he return for his clothes and baggage. Receiving the reply that he might dare the venture, he went on board recovered his watch and pocketbook from under the pillow, seized his saddle bags, valise, great-coat and other clothes, and without hat or boots jumped overboard and made for the land.

He was the last to leave. The tide was coming upriver and the rotten ice, hindering his progress, picking his way from floe to floe, borne high one moment upon the shoulder of a passing cake, pitched forward the next on to one less, hungry

Chief

IN HERE.

This sign and grace woman, although the signal, personality was, in measure, called masculine, called feminine) blending is the key nature we have in ture of a typical I, and foretuner of woman. For the stern isties there is self-assurance, and consequent energy, and consequently variety of interest; a chive mind, self-control tendency to discipline. To there is aesthetic sense, grace and poise, and capacity for tenderness—although its manifestations are severely checked, reason of a general rectitude disposition that regards the play of emotion as bad form. Together with this trait there loyalty to tradition, pride and reserve.

ROHAN BYRD.

balanced, he kept on over the livid debris of ever-forming, ever-breaking ice. One floe gave way under his weight and he was up to his neck in icy water before he managed to scramble to one of the sure footings.

He espied a woman, exhausted, staggering across the ice. MacKenzie rushed to her aid, lifted her bodily and carried her over the huge swells, across rocking ice cakes.

Nearing the shore, an open channel of water confronted them. The woman was unable to jump the intervening space, but MacKenzie, without hesitation, threw himself across the breach, clinging desperately with hands and feet to two separate units of the pack as the woman walked to safety.

At 6 a.m. they reached shore at the village of St. Nicholas, sixteen miles above Quebec, soaked, wet, hungry

J. H. M.

King, Rt. Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie (MG 26 J 7 volume 23) William Lyon Mackenzie - re: articles - Western newspapers n.d., 1909-1948