

## THE LOSS OF THE MOUNT ROYAL

GRAPHIC STORY BY ONE OF SURVIVORS

Eleven of Crew Were on Board When Steamer Turned Turtle—The Rescue.

Kitsalas, B. C., July 8.—As it may be of interest to your readers and to the public in general to have a detailed account as to the loss of the steamer Mount Royal, allow me, as a passenger and an eye witness of the terrible catastrophe, to give you a report.

Leaving Hazelton at 9 a. m. sharp on the 6th inst., and with the waving of hands and handkerchiefs to the people ashore, the steamer went along on the swift current into an eddy where she made a turn, and in a few minutes we were in the forks of the Skeena and Bulkley rivers on a first class and powerful steamer, commanded by an excellent captain, cool and calculating. All were well. There was very little freight on board. The weather was of considerable value. Time as usual went too quickly.

About 11 o'clock we stopped to take on fuel and this took considerable time. Lunch was not served and the majority of us did justice to the same, and I fancy now I see Purser O'Keefe by my side smiling all over and Mate Lewis with his quiet ways on the shore, the steamer went along on the swift current into an eddy where she made a turn, and in a few minutes we were in the forks of the Skeena and Bulkley rivers on a first class and powerful steamer, commanded by an excellent captain, cool and calculating. All were well. There was very little freight on board. The weather was of considerable value. Time as usual went too quickly.

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The captain gave the order "Let Go" and once more we glided down the river, occasionally backing to make some big bend in the river or to avoid a rock. We had possibly forty miles to go before reaching the canyon, so many Indians, while the others were taking in the scenery, grander to my mind, than anything I have ever seen.

About 2 p. m. we passed Lorne Creek place grounds, and at 3 p. m. an extraordinary long blast of the whistle announced we were going through the canyon. O'Keefe remarking to me they had not touched a rock in the way.

At 3 p. m. by my watch we entered the head and O'Keefe said "Hold on tight boys," for a gust of wind had caught her bow and no one on board could prevent the craft from pitching her bow up at least three feet. The gang plank was run out and a heavy cable fastened to a tree. The captain stood at her wheel, knowing the stanchness of his craft, and could hear him talking to his engineer, "Is she making water?" "No, sir," came the answer.

He then ordered the mate to make fast to the cleats fore and aft to prevent, if possible, her swinging across the current. Still no immediate danger was anticipated, but to us on shore it seemed impossible for her to stand the strain.

Other passengers got off, and I gave them a hand up to the shore. Some even ventured back and got their belongings. My own were probably of more value than any, but life was too dear to take any such risks.

The water was now swashing her down. Still she stood the strain and came back and the captain was still at the wheel. Learning that water was coming on the deck, he ordered all hands ashore. Hardly had he done so when she turned over almost instantly. He had just stepped out of the pilot house. The boat slid off the rock and turned turtle with no less than eleven of her crew aboard. And all in less than ten minutes from the time we entered the canyon.

As the once splendid steamer floated down, bottom up, her poor skipper dropped prostrate and wept like a child for his brave men, for allow me to state, I never saw finer discipline or a finer lot of men.

Our eyes were now peering to see who were climbing through the wreckage on to the bottom, and I could see men, and another trying, who proved to be Madigan, who had faithfully stuck to his engines to the very last. It is miraculous how good the second engineer, got ashore on the other island from her engine room and also the skipper from her pilot house, but only shows the splendid stuff they were made of.

O'Keefe and Frayne could have been saved, as they were on shore at one time helping the passengers, but went back aboard to help with the lines and consequently never returned. Strange to relate, the men we expected to learn were drowned were saved, and others vice versa.

The survivors were picked up stranded on a sandbar by Indians and others at the lower end of the canyon, and the Indian chief, who was the first to grip me and Jones, fireman, were in turn rescued. The grip not only contained valuable papers for me from L. Schofield & Co., but also a letter to the Canadian Bank of Commerce.

The next important step in the terrible calamity was to rescue the survivors who were lodged on the island. We had not been on the island more than two hours when we espied a canoe creeping up which made a portage and slipped along by degrees to what is known as Canoe Pass. The boat was of the same, but espied another canoe much larger coming up. This also made the portage. This canal was now up and five portages at a time allowed to get in. In the meantime the little canoe had made the passage through Canoe Pass and had crept up the bank until able to cross the river above the canyon. Here they tied the canoe.

Already our first passengers were rescued across and the Indians were ready for the occasion. All the time some boats going this way were landed safely over to the skill of these men. Mrs. Phillips and Miss Tomlinson were landed in the meantime on the opposite side where they could take a trail and reach the telegraph office. Those of us on the opposite side were thankful to hunt a trail and get down to Mr. Durpan's, where we landed and were treated hospitably.

Yesterday morning carpenters made a neat coffin for the remains of A. G. Peterson, L. E. Zolig, C. Spidal, A. Fork, E. Bessett, Mr. Rhodes, E. E. Potts, Mrs. F. M. Phillips, Miss Annie L. Tomlinson, nine Indians.

Captain S. B. Johnson, Mrs. Johnson, chief engineer; D. A. Good, second engineer; C. Clunes, second officer; Fireman Jones, Tommy Aklyon, cabin boy; Honey Nakapenou, cabin boy; Parry Kito, woodman cook.

Drowned—W. Lewis, first officer; James O'Keefe, purser; Archie Willis, steward; S. B. Frayne, fireman; Frank Aneata, deck boy; J. Morispana, carpenter.

(Signed) EDWARD POTTS.

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