

command that was now his for the first time in his experience; and which, catering as it did to his peacock vanity, was paramount to all things else. The work lagged sadly and fell behind. The daily reports Burton signed and sent down to headquarters became worse and worse.

Each day, too, the feud between the dives at Big Cloud and Bridge Gang No. 3, fanned by the crews of the construction trains, who taunted McGuire and the men with cowardice, grew stronger. For the trainmen, having no idea of disregarding Burton's orders and allowing the bridge men to ride down on the empties, rubbed it in until the gang writhed under their gibes.

Munford did not come in for much of this personally. The trainmen, none of them, seemed to display any particular hankering for discussing the question in his presence; but he got it second-hand from McGuire and the gang. The outcome of it all was a decision one night after supper to board the construction train the following evening, Burton, the train crew and the company to the contrary, and go down to Big Cloud if they had to run the train themselves. Munford concurred in the decision by blowing very gently on his knuckles. It looked bad for the peace and quiet of Big Cloud; and it looked bad for Burton's standing with the company.

Munford, as commander-in-chief, and McGuire, as chief of staff, withdrew from the circle and strolled off by themselves to perfect their plans for the next day's campaign, taking the trail in the direction of