

"It's more than likely that any notice we get will come from the coroner," answered the unbelieving Murphy.

Hardened as they were, and accustomed to taking heavy risks, McNaughton's crew were astounded when they learned of his intentions.

"A storm on the trip wouldn't be nothin' at all," grumbled Lomass, voicing the sentiments of the rest; "but this startin' out right in the very teeth o' one's something I never 'ave seen done afore."

Long John Anderson took it on himself to remonstrate with McNaughton.

"Why not?" expostulated the young foreman in reply, and that was all the satisfaction he gave them.

But none of them backed out. McNaughton's offer of high wages was too strong a bait.

"The pay's big," Anderson told them. "You've got to take some chances for it. If there weren't no risk, there wouldn't be half the money in it."

Then McNaughton played his trump card—played it in the form of a telegram to the Sarnia Bay Mill Company. It read:

SARNIA BAY MILL CO.,
SARNIA, ONT.

Am leaving here with extra heavy raft to-day. Will not require assistance until I reach Kettle Point, but you had better meet me there with two tugs.

MCNAUGHTON.

"I've got an idea that'll prove more important than all the good spikings and lashings we've made this week," said he. "And we've made some mighty good ones, too," he added, reflectively.

It was just twelve thirty when they started. The tugs puffed, the timbers groaned and squeaked, and they swung slowly out into the current of the Moon. Once started, it went easier, and, in the placid waters of the river, the pulling was fairly light.

In an hour they were in Georgian Bay. At first the difference was slight; but, as they gradually drew away from the shelter of the shore, the gale increased. The wind was bitter, and the men, crouching around the boilers of the tugs, tried to keep warm. McNaughton stayed in the pilot

house of the front tug, and directed operations until they were out of sight of land.

So strong was the gale from the north, it took them a full four days to beat across the bay. Under ordinary circumstances, they might have accomplished it in less than half that time, but with the necessity of keeping well up to clear the point, and the extra large raft, it called for considerably longer. Once out in Lake Huron, the work was comparatively easy. The gale, instead of abating at all, had ripened into a shrill November blast, and a course held due across for the American shore would drive the raft almost to its destination. The force of the wind and the current would carry it down.

"I don't reckon we'll have much trouble till we get near Kettle Point; but we'll have some tall hustling to do then if we ain't going on the net stakes," said McNaughton.

It was late Thursday afternoon when they sighted the Point. The waves were piling high over one another. Billow after billow broke its crest across the timbers, and swept shoreward. The tail end of the raft was washed in toward the beach, but the front, guided by the stronger tug, kept well out toward the horizon. Yet, puff and pull as they might, the stern north wind was stronger than they.

The night closed in dark and cold, and the wind increased to almost a hurricane. The danger was hourly growing nearer. The tugs were pulling valiantly, but the task was simply beyond their capabilities. With herculean strength, the Lake tossed them about like corks. Not a man dozed; the crisis was certain to come within the next twelve hours, and all were awake and waiting to meet it.

Great mountains of water piled up toward the north, and came dashing down upon them. With tremendous rushes they hurled up into seething, hissing masses, and then swirled over the timbers. Time after time, the enormously heavy bunch of logs was tossed into the air on the top of a giant breaker, as if it had been so many matches. Then, as suddenly, it would slide away into the roll of the wide trough, and, like a living thing, lie shivering and trembling in dread agony of what the mighty waters' next attack would accomplish. The night was