

The "Florizel" Enquiry

John C. Crosbie (continued):

ship. While at the Briton I met Mr. Marshall, the gunner on board, and asked him if he would go up to assist me with the gun and firing rockets got aboard another sleigh and went down to the coastal office, Bowring be beneficial. We got consent from Capt. McDermott and Mr. Marshall, and we there met Capt. Kennedy, McGettigan and two or three others belong to Bowring Bros., and they told me they did not have a full crew for the Terra Nova. I said that was easy to settle because there were some Naval Reservists that could be had from the Briton. At the coastal office I rang up and got the Naval Reservists we required. Then somebody proposed some kind of a life-saving apparatus for throwing a line aboard, to go out on the train. I cannot remember who suggested that, whether Mr. Bowring suggested that in his own home or not. We wondered if there was one to be got. I said I did not think there was one in the country, but I did not know. He said it would be a great thing if we could get one ready for the train. I said yes. When we were in the coastal office we tried to find out if there was one in the country. Some one suggested that there was one at the Department of Marine & Fisheries and we rang up Mr. Goodridge, the Deputy Minister, who told us to get hold of Mr. Wm. Rogerson, to whom we sent the sleigh up. He is inspector of lighthouses. The next I heard about this arrangement was that they got it alright, but no one could work it except Mr. Joseph Roper. We could not get him but we got his son. Mr. McGettigan was despatched to see it put aboard the train. When we got up to the train the captain of the Coban was there I think, or the chief engineer of the Coban. He told us he had some kind of an appliance aboard the Coban that would be useful. I went aboard the Briton to get some rum, which I could not get anywhere else, to send up on the train. The Briton was the only place I could get anything of that sort. I got a gallon of rum from the man who had charge of it. I could get none anywhere else only a little whiskey. I thought it might be beneficial for the people coming off the

that Mr. Bowring was with me. But I think he was. When I got there Captain Simonson was there and Mr. Tessier. He was taking some provisions out of the store and putting them aboard Bowring's tug to bring them out on board the Hawk. I called Captain Simonson aside and said, "Captain Kean is going up in the Hawk with you, practically in charge. You will give him any assistance possible." And Capt. Kean was there—I remember, I thought it funny at the time—and turned around and said, "You understand, now, Captain Simonson, that I am in charge of the Hawk," and Capt. Simonson said, yes, all right Captain Kean. I should say that was after 12 o'clock, because we had not left the station until the train went and after that we went down to Captain Kean's and back to Bowring's wharf again.

Q. How long was it from the time Mr. Steer suggested the Gordon C. and Mr. Stone suggested the Hawk? A. That was about 11 or a little before that they were suggested. The Hawk was not thought of up to that time. Mr. Stone must have done all right because Capt. Simonson was there when we arrived down getting the provisions and supplies on board. I know Mr. Stone was arranging to go down on the Home, as I understood, I thought he was going on the Home. Then I said to Capt. Kean you had better go over with Simonson and bring the Hawk over here as they want to take some coals out of her, and he went over and I waited there until the Hawk returned. Then I said to Capt. Simonson, "You want some coals out, and he said yes, there are about 20 tons to come out of her." Capt. Kean said yes she would want that to make her right. I looked around and saw my own man, McDonald, there. I said to him get this coals out quickly, and I said don't mind how many suits of clothes you possibly can. A crowd started in getting out the coals. I said to Capt. Kean you will have time to go get your dinner and by the time you get back she will be ready. This would then be about a quarter to one they started to get the coals out of the Hawk, anywhere from 12:30 to a quarter to 1. And while talking to Capt. Kean one of Bowring's clerks came down and gave me a message

from Capta Hayden from the wreck commissioner to this effect: "The document itself is in existence somewhere. As I remember it, it was this: 'The seas were washing all over her; all lives lost and she was a total wreck.' There was something else about board for coffins. I took Capt. Kean onside and showed him this message and he said, 'It is all finished, there is no use my going up there. There is no use the Hawk going, they are all gone now.' I said I suppose if you think that way, it is no use. He said I must get Weston and go home, I am broken hearted. We drove up the archway then and we got Weston Kean in Bowring's dry goods store, where he was fitting himself out with oilclothes and stuff to go up on the Hawk. I drove them home and went in to Mr. Eric Bowring with the message and told him what had happened. Mr. Bowring read the message and he was very much broken up about it, and I think he rang up Mr. John Harvey. I was there perhaps a half an hour and went home to dinner. While I was home, I should say about 2 o'clock, I don't know exactly the hour, the telephone rang and I got a call that Mr. Tessier said that life had been seen between seas off the Florizel, and would he send the Hawk. I said yes, send anything you like as quick as you like.

Q. Did you stop all preparations when you received that first message about water being all over the ship and all lives lost?

A. I simply said, as far as stopping anything was concerned, when Capt. Kean said it was no use in the Hawk going, it was just as well to discontinue, so they did discontinue and went home to dinner. After that the Hawk went out. I saw her going out the narrows between 4 and 5 o'clock. I don't know what hour.

Q. Did Capt. Simonson go on his own responsibility or Mr. Tessier's?

A. Mr. Tessier was the agent and he rang me up and asked me, and I said certainly go, and Mr. Bowring said for him to go too as far as I remember the transaction. That completes the account of the Hawk. That afternoon I interviewed a lot of people who had relatives on board. All that night I was kept pretty well on the go, and I would like to say that the operator at Mount Pearl

kept me informed all Sunday night of what was happening at the wreck as much as he could. I was practically up all night. I used to telephone Mrs. Dr. Mitchell who was at Mrs. Smythe's and she would telephone the other parties of what was going on at the wreck. I would like to say that Mr. Eric Bowring and myself could not have done any more than we did if we had to do it all over again. I know of nothing that we could improve upon. There might have been mistakes possibly, but I know of none.

Q. The statement has been made that the Home was ready to leave at 8 o'clock in the morning?

A. That I take it can be readily denied by the President of the Reid-Nfld. Co. or any of his associates. The only thing I know of, they told me at one time that they could not get a crew for her and I told Mr. Reid there would be no trouble about getting a crew, as we could get Naval Reservists and they would be done in ten or fifteen minutes.

Q. When did she actually leave?

A. I should say I saw the Home passing Bowring's anywhere between 12:30 and 1 o'clock. Whoever made the statement that the Home could be got away at 8 o'clock was wrong, that would be an utter impossibility.

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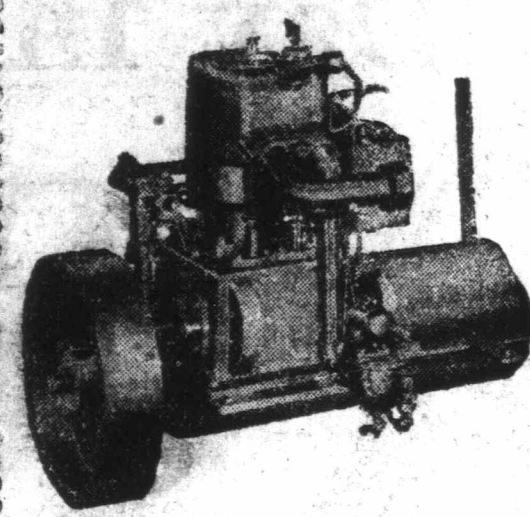
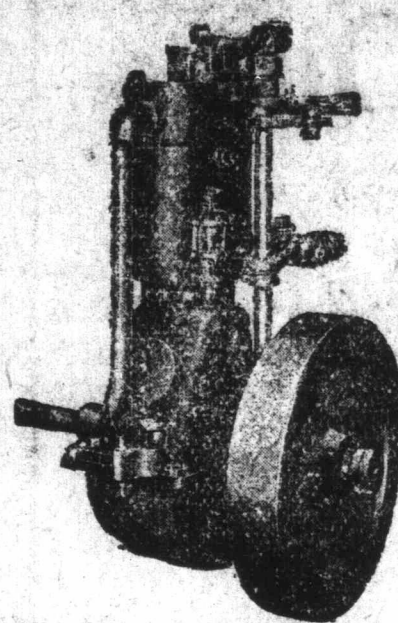
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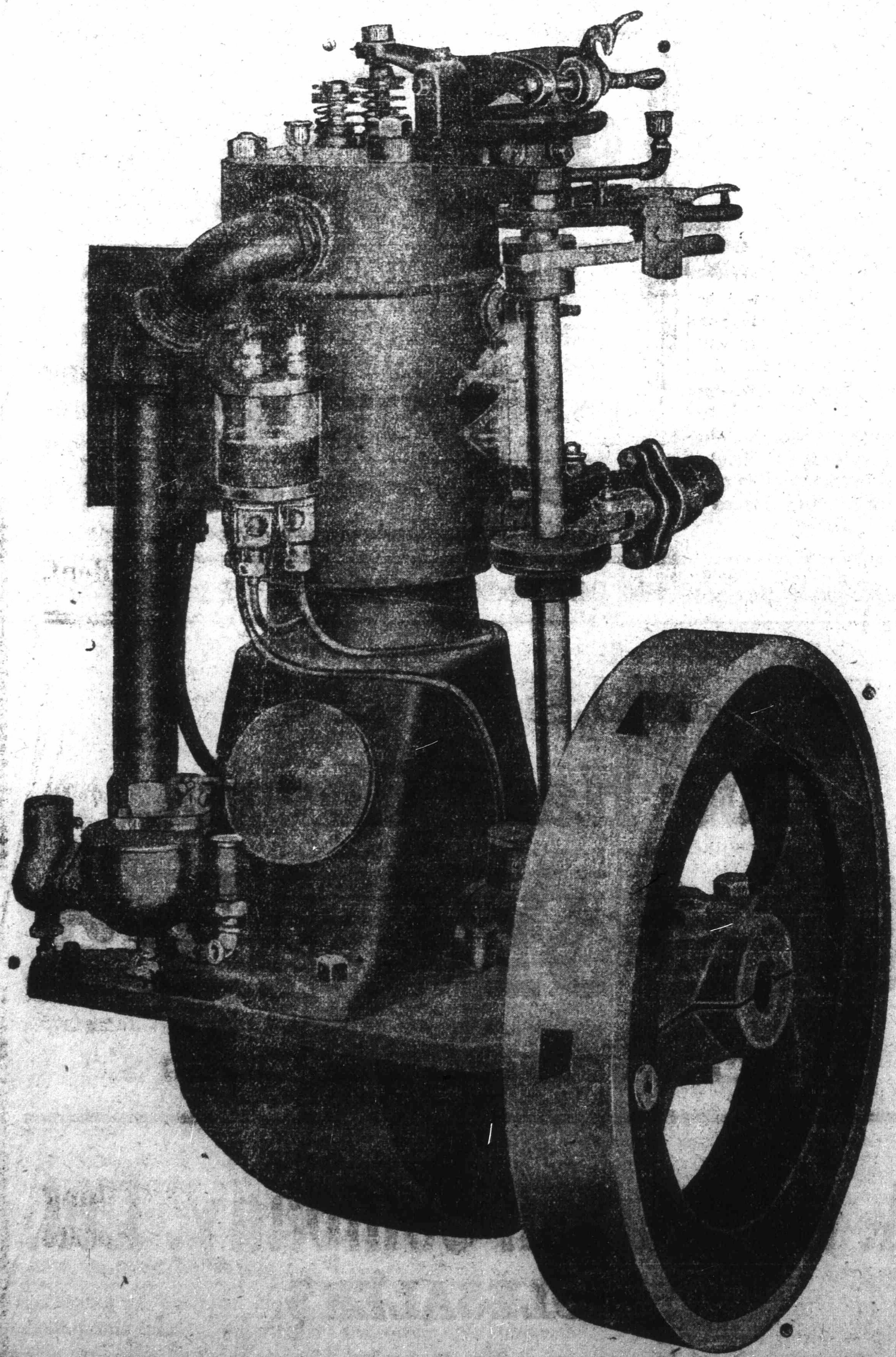
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