

"The lubricating oil in the engine room was getting short and it was necessary to refill from barrels lashed on deck, though with such conditions it was impossible to unlash them, so the only thing possible to do was to carry the oil from the barrels with buckets to the engine room. That made the decks greasy and with the squally weather, the ship tossing about like an eggshell, it was a wonder that none of us went overboard. As it was, the bucking of the ship caused the wheel to kick so much that it threw two men over it into the wing of what little bridge we had.

"The next two days were a nightmare, as gales continued to whip the seas to mountainous proportions, with the result that the ship was labouring like a winded horse, and on the seventh day we only covered 71 miles. We thought we had experienced just about as much as was possible, other than the ship foundering, but in the morning of the ninth day, the silencer burst into flames when we were going at full speed, with the advantage of a break in the weather. Flames were coming out of the funnel and it was necessary to keep the vessel head on to the wind to prevent the flames touching the bridge structure, which consisted of a canvas cover rigged as our only protection against the North Atlantic elements.

"Down in the engine room it was impossible to see the engineers for fumes, and we only knew they were all right by shouting below and receiving their answers, but in about half an hour the engineers had remedied the cause of the fire and, though the silencer was still warm, we proceeded at slow speed. We found our fresh water tank had burst and number one ballast tank was leaking. The worst thing of all was the collapse of the cooking stove, which meant that baking was impossible, and as our fresh bread was just on the finishing point, we looked forward to living on ship's biscuit.

"Measuring what little water was left, we estimated that by careful use, it would take us over. This meant rationing each man, using the balance of our fresh water very sparingly and using salt water for cooking, so that each man could have a "cat's lick" with fresh water only once a day. There was no water available for shaving and very little for drinking, so we spread the covers of the lifeboats out in the form of cups to catch any possible rain. The next two days were clear, but on April 18 we had a light shower and were able to gather some rain water. In the meantime, we had our attention turned elsewhere when the generator broke down, which meant that we had no electric light and had to go around the ship using oil lamps and torches while the engineers worked unceasingly trying to make repairs.

"After three days' continuous work, we found that it was impossible to re-start the generator and found that we had only sufficient lubricating oil for three days, so we decided to head for Newfoundland, trusting to our compass to lead us in that direction. We estimated that we were about 60 hours out of St. John's and it turned out that this was correct. We were favoured by good weather and we were able to refill the fuel tank and empty the last of the lubricating oil from the deck into the feed pipe.

"A following wind and sea helped us considerably on April 21, and on the 22nd we passed an iceberg, which indicated that we might be nearing land. We hit a heavy snowstorm, which impeded our progress, but we arrived off St. John's about 11 a.m. Still snowing very heavily, with weather conditions preventing the pilot boat from lying outside the harbour, we steamed (rather, staggered) in, where the pilot boarded us at a well-welcomed quay, where we took stores, lubricating oil and fresh water, and a well-earned rest.

"The balance of the story is tame compared with what we had passed through. We left St. John's on April 24 in thick fog. We struck fairly heavy weather on April 25, but this abated on April 26, when during the evening we passed Cape Ray. With the usual expected thick fog and adverse currents, we arrived at Father Point on April 30, by which time we said our prayers, thankful that we were in sheltered waters. We passed Quebec on May 1, and had to anchor owing to a slackening of the tide. Anchoring was easy, but the anchor had