

## HOUSE AND TRACTOR LOST THROUGH ICE

It was almost an unbelievable project. It would make the news - it would be a story to tell the future generations - no matter which way I went. It went the wrong way - the unbelievable was attempted - the unbelievable happened.

Salvage operations for the tractor and house which dropped through the Lake Superior ice March 2<sup>nd</sup> into 90 feet of water, just off Madeline Island, have been scrubbed until spring.

The seven room, completely furnished, house valued in the area of \$ 40,000 and the White Freightline tractor and trailer valued at around \$100,000, went through the ice about a mile out from the Island.

The house was being towed from Port Superior across to the Island, where it was to be pulled up by the Pub and from there to the owner's property in the Madeline Island Corporation Golf Course area. It was one of four purchased by individual owners which were scheduled to be moved by John Alberg of Minneapolis.

Dale Movers of Minneapolis was hired to move the houses. A road was plowed from Port Superior to the Pub at La Pointe, and the ice was checked repeatedly, averaging 2 feet all the way. Satisfied that the operation could be completed safely, and in spite of much head shaking among the ice-wise, the tractor and house loaded on a frame with two four wheel trucks at the back, rather than log skids, started for the Island.

Many are people had grave doubts as to the feasibility of the project, but watched and prayed and silently cheered as it seemed all would be well, while not expecting it to be.

Things went smoothly enough at the start and many eyes were watching as the 25 ton cavalcade slowly but surely came closer and closer to their goal, and suddenly the goal was no longer reachable.

The wheels under the house dropped through on one side, and forward progress stopped – and with it the hopes which had been climbing steadily plummeted downward more rapidly than the house and nothing at all could be done to prevent the inevitable.

As the house tilted to the side the owner of the truck made a desperate attempt to free it from the house. It couldn't be freed, and suddenly was gone. Fortunately, no one went down with it.

And while many watched helplessly, at the scene and on the shore, the house gradually settled down in the water until only the roof remained visible. It was truly and suddenly a sad and tragic ending to what would have been a great and amazing accomplishment.

Due to heavy snow there was nothing could be done for a day or two, but when the weather cleared Dale movers sent divers down with cables and equipment to attempt to salvage the truck. After a couple of attempts, and considerable trouble, it was decided to give up until the ice breaks up.

Ed Erickson of Bayfield has been given the job of salvaging the house as well as the six-wheel-drive tractor. He plans to wrap a couple steel cables around it and stake them to sound ice some distance away to hold the house in place until the ice breaks up. He will lift the truck with the crane on his LCT Outer Island. He has also taken a contract for moving the other three houses from Port Superior with the LCT.