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SUEZ CANAL TRAFFIC BLOCKED

Positive developed : 53 m - 175 ft
(Masraff material)

A greek ~~opened~~ (Stavros Niarchos, Onassis' brother in law and competitor) oil tanker, the "World Peace", smashed into an open swing bridge, blocking the strategic waterway more effectively than bombs did in World War II.

By nightfall 70 ships were jammed up at the ends of the waterway. The Canal engineers estimated it might take until next Wednesday to get navigation started again. Seven ships were trapped inside the Canal.

The 10,892 tons tanker World Peace, under Liberian registry but owned by a Greek Company headed by the brother-in-law of shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis, veered into the open arms of the swing bridge while going through early Friday morning. First reports indicated the ship's steering gear had jammed. One entire span of the bridge at EL FERDAN, nine miles north of Ismailia, became snagged on the superstructure of the World Peace and was carried 50 yards north of the bridge. There the span and tanker wedged themselves on to the west bank of the canal.

The bridge is the double-spanned swing type with an opening of 197 feet. It was built by the British Army during the buildup for the Alamein campaign in North Africa during World War II to carry a railroad across the canal. It has long been regarded as a menace to navigation, and at least two ship collisions have occurred there previously. It was to be scrapped in another month.

When the bridge is opened the spans run north and south, parallel with the canal banks. The World Peace, when more than halfway through, apparently swung toward the west bank and hit one of the opened spans and carried it off the pier supports. The fact that the tanker was loaded with crude oil prevented the hundreds of workmen called from starting work immediately with acetylene torches to cut away the steel span.

Picture shows :

general and m;L;shots of the World Peace, with the El Ferdan bridge span across her superstructures. Workmen sawing wood-planks that will be ready to support the bridge-span when lifted from the ship. Bull-dozers at work pushing the spans on the bank to level the ground so that the fallen span can be slipped on the bank when uplified. Cautious work with acetylene torches to cut the bride-span on the ship as it is, it weighs 30 Tons and engineers are trying to cut it into pieces that will be more easily lifted. Enquiry is started by policemen and Company officials, Governor and engineers discuss with Ship's officers. Mr.Gambier, Canal Company Chief at Ismailia explains facts to reporters arriving from all over Egypt. Crowd come to have a look numerous people who wanted to visit their family on the other side of the canal are stranded. shots of stranded ships along the canal Capt James Petters commanding the World Peace discussing the accident with his Chief Engineer.

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