



A NATIONAL FILM BOARD

Release

THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA, MONTREAL

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SHIPS TRAPPED BY SURPRISE ONBLAUGHT OF WINTER

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CANAL TRAFFIC PARALYZED

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Thus.

Montreal, Quebec, December, 1958.

Problem --- winter freeze-up too soon. Solution --- thousands of hours of man labour against winter odds. The sudden onslaught of winter accompanied by an unprecedented and prolonged severe cold spell caught everyone by surprise, and created a critical situation, causing ship captains to grow apprehensive about the idea of spending the winter in Canada.

In the Lachine canal, workmen laboured frantically around the clock in an effort to keep lock gates free of ice, using steam pipes and chipping at the ice with 20-foot steel-tipped poles. But progress in the nine-mile canal is agonizingly slow as ships wait hours at the locks while workmen coax, wheedle, curse and struggle to force open the old valves and gates. The gates are used to try and crush the heavy ice back against the canal wall, then they are partially closed and workers push the broken chunks into the open water with their poles.

This is the last season as a major waterway for the old canal. Next spring she will be replaced by the new and much more efficient St. Lawrence Seaway.

For ships locked in the icy grip of the frozen canal, the possibility of running out of fuel is another hazard, and along the canal coal is loaded into a freighter, while its heavy cargo of steel is removed in an effort to lighten the ship in the hope that it will lift off the ice and be able to move.

At one time more than 30 ocean freighters were in danger of being trapped for the winter, but canal officials refused to admit defeat and fought with every available means to get every ship out, and this week the last ocean ship cleared the canal to tie up in Montreal harbour.

However the struggle is not yet over --- nineteen ships are held in the grip of ice in the harbour while eleven remain ice bound between Montreal and Sorel. Ice breakers are working to widen an escape channel for the ships to lessen the possibility of mishaps once they begin moving, and then will begin the task of freeing the ships from the solidly packed ice.

Note:

Isobel Kehoe, our producer, is trapped in the harbour area on board the Transontario, a German freighter bound for Hamburg. At the moment no one can get to the ship and today and tomorrow it is hoped that she will be refueled by helicopter with barrels of oil, as she is running out of fuel.

It is hoped that our next story of this unprecedented freeze-up --- the worst in the history of navigation on the St. Lawrence --- will be the refueling of this ship, and the clearing by four icebreakers of the upper lake area, where now 11 ships are trapped.

SHOT LIST - CANAL FREEZE-UP - 600'

1. MLS Ships in ice-clogged canal.
2. MLS Pan ship in canal.
3. MS Ice, tilt up side of ship "Transontario".
4. MS Ship captain looks out at canal of ice.
5. LS Coal loaded by crane into ship held fast in canal.
6. MS Coal dumped on to ship.
7. CS Man's face.
8. MLS Cargo being unloaded from ship in canal.
9. CS Heavy steel cargo loaded on to truck at side of canal.
10. CS Worker.
11. MS Men chip ice at side of canal.
12. CS Shipping ice with picks.
13. MS Group of onlookers.
14. MS Workers trying to crush ice by hitting it with poles.
15. CS Ice as blows from pole crack it.
16. MS Two men watching.
17. MS Workers trying to dislodge ship from ice with pike poles
and hose.
18. CS Chunks of ice around ship.
19. MLS Workers at lock gates.
20. MS Tilt up lock gates covered with ice.
21. CS Workers.
22. CS Pike poles and steam hose.
23. MS Ship held in ice in snow fall, tilt down to icy water.
24. MS Heavy snow, pan to ship waiting at locks.
25. MS Canal workers on lock gates, tilt down to ice below.
26. CS Pushing chunks of ice with long poles.
27. MCS As lock gates open.
28. CS Workers.
29. MS Sailors, as ship moves slowly through locks.
30. MS Sailor looks through porthole as ship moves.
31. CS Ice churning from movement of ship.
32. MS "Coniscliffe Hall" moves down canal.
33. CS Lock gates close.
34. LS Ship in canal.
35. MS Canal workers force ice chunks out through partially open
lock gates.
36. MS " " " " " " " " " " "

37. MCS Straight on shot as ship moves forward in canal (towards camera)
38. CS Young seaman leans over to look down at ice.
39. CS Shipsnoses through ice.
40. MS Seamen on board at cable drum.
41. MS Ship at locks.
42. CS " "
43. CS Lock gates opened.
44. MS Cables untied.
45. MS Ship starts to move through locks.
46. CS Ice, as ship edges through.
47. MCS Captain of "Transontario".
48. MS Ship approaches railway lift bridge coming into Montreal harbour.
49. MCS Crew members of "Transontario".
50. CS First mate.
51. CS Captain looks around harbour.
52. MS Pan harbour area.
53. MS Captain, tilt up to ships in harbour.
54. MCS As "Transontario" docks.
55. CS " " "
56. CS Tilt down another ship in harbour.
57. MS Loading and unloading at harbour.
58. MS " " " "
59. MCS Dock workers as cargo is swung over by crane.
60. CS Workers unfastening cable.
61. MS Cable drum.
62. MCS Cargo loaded into hold of ship.
63. MLS As in 57.