

J-F 85000

NORMANDIE FIRE.... FIRST PICTURES.

During her conversion into a troop transport fire breaks out in the 83,000 ton liner NORMANDIE (recently named LAFAYETTE).

Investigators established, apparently beyond all doubt, that the sparks which started the fire came from an acetylene blow lamp which was being used close to bales of inflammable material. Orders had been given to move the bales but they were shifted only two or three feet. Although all suggestions of sabotage have been officially discounted, the whole business sounds mighty strange. Thousands of workers had to flee for their lives, as flames roared through the one-time French luxury ~~liner~~ liner. The dockside at New York Harbour is cleared as firemen and apparatus from all over Manhattan fight the stubborn blaze that rages for four hours.

Ambulance men are kept busy as the many casualties are brought away from the fire-swept ship.

While the fire is confined to the three top decks, a new danger presents itself. The closing of the fireproof doors has prevented the escape of hundreds of tons of water poured into her by the fire hoses. Gradually the ship becomes top heavy and she takes on a dangerous list. This was ultimately responsible for her capsizing. Early in the morning she toppled over and lay in the soft mud in the docks. Not sabotage? I wonder?