

FLOODS: NEW DEFENCES HOLD

Relenting nature gave the east coast a respite. On Canvey Island and northwards throughout the stricken area there would have been unimaginable disaster had the storm continued. As it was there was time to repair some of the breaches in the sea defence. It was work in mud, filth and intense cold. Every hour was vital in the few days remaining before the next Spring tides.

The W.V.S. sorted great quantities of clothing sent from all over the country, for people who escaped with hardly enough to keep them warm. To Benfleet Secondary-School Relief-Centre, opposite Canvey Island, came the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret. Their visit underlined the nation-wide sympathy for the flood victims.

First aid and shelter were by this time well organised.

How tragic ^{is} the plight of Holland was unfolding itself day by day. 1300 people were known to be dead; it was suspected the total might exceed 2,000. More than a thousand square-miles has been lost to the sea. Holland faces the same problem as England, but on a ^{much} vaster scale:— to save further life, feed the survivors and repair the dikes. Help was sent from England. Nowhere was aid ever more needed. R.A.F. Ansons dropped supplies. Valettas helped rescue work. Helicopters brought ⁶⁰⁰ ~~200~~ people from houses surrounded by deep water. The scale of the Dutch disaster appalls. 10,000 people were evacuated from the Island of Schouwen-Duiveland alone, ~~thousands~~

Coastal railway lines are wrecked completely over long stretches.

(182) * (GF Street) In our own misfortunes we know what is being suffered by the Dutch. 4 to England

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The Lord Mayor of London has launched a National Appeal.

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Repairs to a 40-yard gap in the River Ouse near King's Lynn was one of the largest single operations. Altogether there are nearly 500 breaches in the sea walls already closed Cambridge University students were among volunteers helpers. King's Lynn itself is menaced until this gap is sealed up.

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Train loads of sandbags were rushed to Great Yarmouth. Behind this town, the enormous stretch of Breydon Water has burst its banks. The railway to some extent impedes the flow into the town. As the sandbags came from London barriers were thrown across the line and the four railway arches through which the water ran.

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To pump back the flood water they used fire engines, ^{and} not only ^{the} own - Brigades from the Midlands sent all the pumps they could spare. There was a feeling everywhere that, colossal though the task is, men are getting control of the situation.

It remains a battle against time, till the next great tides test the repaired defences. Bulldozers make new sand dunes to replace those washed away. By night the work ~~is~~ continued, sometimes, as when our cameramen took these pictures, in snow-blizzards under conditions next door to impossible.

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The many thousand engaged on this work, achieving so much in a short time, against the ^{full} fury of nature, earn the thanks of the whole country. Barring another storm we may soon be applauding their victory over disaster.