

The closing of the last breach in the dikes of Zeeland took place on the 5th and the 6th of November, just few days more than 9 months after the February disaster occurred.

This gap had a width of about 250 metres, through which the sea twice a day streamed into the polders of the island of Schouwen-Duiveland. The water engineers decided to close this gap by means of 4 huge Phoenix caissons, which were bought from England, where they still lay unused since D-Day.

They were of the type used for the Mulberry harbours in 1944 for the Normandy coast.

The first one was placed at the end of October. The 2nd one in the morning of the 5th of November. The 3rd in the morning of the 6th of November and the last in the night of the 6th to the 7th of November.

The film we are sending you is a roughly assembled one and has 3 parts:

Part 1.

Coverage of November 5th.

The placing of the 2nd caisson (1st one already on its place since October).

The 2nd one is provided with a sort of "guillotine", consisting of steel pipes which are falling down into the bottom to prevent the water from passing between the caisson and the dike.

As soon as the caisson (60 M. long, 19 M. high and 18 M. broad) was sunk, the place was fortified with stones, and the surroundings were strengthened with clay and sand being pressed into the terrain through pipes.

Part 2.

Coverage of November 6th.

Arrival and sinking of the 3rd caisson.

This one was placed at right angles to the first.

This always happens at the time the tide is at its lowest level.

In the picture you will see people measuring the level of the tide. On the caissons there are lots of workers and engineers. They are in contact with the shore by means of walkie-talkies and megaphones, and as soon as they get the signal, they open the bassins in the interior of the caisson, thus allowing the water to enter it and to sink it. Tug-boats keep the caisson above the sinking-place against the tidal-stream.

The arrival of the 4th caisson took place while the third one was being placed.

This 4th one was to be placed in the night hours during the night's low tide, but was already anchored behind the 1st one.

In the afternoon of the 6th of November the high tide for the last time in a period of 279 days entered the polder and flooded the villages in it. Through the narrow gap still present the tide ran with a speed of 4 Meters a second, but everybody was confident, that it would really be the last time, because evening operations were to close the gap.

Part 3.

The closing.

This took place in the presence of H.M. Queen Juliana and Prime Minister Dr. Drees and hundreds of other people, onlookers and workers, who wanted to see this historic feat in this struggle for repair. Search lights and magnesium torches and special sodium illumination lighted this area. Exactly 3 min. before midnight the caisson was sunk and the last breach closed. Dutch engineers and workers had again show their capability. There was great joy on the spot; Queen Juliana and the Ministers sharing in the cheering.

The next day in all parts of the country the flags were hoisted. The Netherlands took it for a historic and festive day.

Last shots of the coverage show the situation in the morning of the 7th of November, the breach being closed, repair work still going on.