

QUEEN AND DUKE VISIT FLOOD AREAS

Along the Mabelthorpe - Sutton-on-Sea coastling the crisis was not over but optimism ran high. Against the new spring tides the hastily shored-up sea walls withstood. As the Duke of Edinburgh could see, the strain./ ~~H~~arring a storm in the next day or two, danger was being kept at bay.

Slogging hard work all round, digging and sandbagging, day and night in bitterest weather, were going to reap reward. The householder could spare time to dig himself out. Flying to Suffolk the Duke/~~mounted~~ sailed in a naval launch to inspect some of the fifty breaches in the estuary of the River Deben, the biggest still yawning 200 yards wide. ~~Jumping-out~~

At Green Sluice Point the Duke saw 800 RAF men and 200 boys working against the mud and ~~time~~, hoping for that slice of luck that even the bravest efforts must have.

To Purfleet and Tilbury went the Queen herself, asking to meet the people who suffered in the flood. The water has gone, but the flood-mark is not the only reminder; damp and mud remain. RAF hot-air driers, normally used to warm up engines at cold bases, are making houses livable again. People said afterwards how much they were heartened by Her Majesty's understanding sympathy.

Across the river at Gravesend the Queen was met by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Lord Harris. Here ~~the Queen~~ visited the homes of more flood victims.

R.A. F. Skymasters ran a sandbag airlift into Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, the loads part of the 5-and-a-half-million coming from eight countries. By night, too, the operation continued. Even stricken ~~Holland~~ ^{bags} made her contribution to help England. The humble sandbag has no substitute. Countless thousands strengthened the Canvey Island defences. And here, too, the high tides were kept out. There was no short way to victory. Bag after bag was filled, passed down the human chain and dumped in its place.

The highest tide expected was mercifully just short of disaster level. The scrapers and bulldozers pushed back each threatened breach. Since the great calamity all that was possible had been done. The coast was intact. Luck had come to the deserving.