

## URGES ACTION TO STOP FLOODS

C. F. Williams of Big Seed Company Calls for Positive Prevention.

I think, in fact know, and there are few who do not think as I do, that it is a pitiable shame and an unnecessary condition, for the good people of this section of Washington to be called upon to look forward to flood waters about every so often; a sort of periodical threat to wipe out many homes, destroy farms and livestock.

Not being a resident of this vicinity, this is my first experience with a flood of this character and in this locality. But, nevertheless, what I have seen during the last few days in the way of loss of livestock, total loss of homes and wonderful dairy barns, to say nothing about the terrible injury done to crops and seeded areas, as well as the inconvenience entailed, I am absolutely astounded, perfectly dumfounded that this condition is permitted to exist year after year.

From what I can learn, folks who buy here after an investigation of climate, resources and local peculiarities, are not surprised when a flood is predicted; they do not get overly excited when a warning is sent forth that the dike here, or the dike there is in a weakened condition and likely to break. They take it as a matter of course, and even smile while it may mean, and in dozens of cases does mean almost total loss to them of this world's goods.

I admire their spirit and their nerve, but I do not understand or admire their patience.

To me this is a wonderful country—and when I say country, reference is made to the immediate eight or ten thousand or more acres where most anything will grow and where many crops are world beaters. These very flats, where water is allowed to run and flood almost at will, are among the most valuable sections of soil in the world. And when you read this do not say or think that this is written for any other purpose than to instill into the reader's mind the valuable-ness of this part of Washington. You know the statement is true.

This periodic inundation of soil and destruction of property, to say nothing about the uneasiness of mind and loss to merchants and others, is unnecessary, and ought not to be tolerated any longer than it is required to find a solution and put it into execution!

There is a remedy.

We are told, upon inquiry, that

once or twice action has been started to bring about a remedy, but for some reason it fell by the wayside like so many good movements do. This was and most assuredly must have been the fault of the people right here. Perhaps not you, or you, or the other fellow—but the fault of all combined. It is not the purpose of this article to place the blame for inaction in the past. The one idea is to start a movement that will get results.

And results you may have, if you work to that end, concertedly, persistently and whole-heartedly for the good of the cause at stake.

Certainly the cause and the stakes are high enough to interest the biggest men in this section of the state. Let them come forward and, as one man, enlist the aid of business men, farmers, commercial clubs, railroads, civic organizations, state highway commission, and, of course, incidentally, your representatives to the state legislature.

Where are those to lead in this fight for a remedy that will put a stop to this awful loss that comes to our people year after year, in a greater or lesser degree? If it is the right thing for the local Commercial Club to take up and launch, let's get busy. You will only have to start it and let it be known before

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would tend to portray to the mind of a legislator the great need for action in the matter of controlling the freshets.

Only in a hurried manner has it been possible for the writer to discuss the matter with old-timers or those who ought to know something about a method to eliminate to a great extent the danger of high water. The best and most intelligent information came from J. W. Meehan, civil engineer, of Mount Vernon, who has studied the situation and followed the matter for thirty years.

Mr. Meehan has a farm which is flooded at this writing. He expected it to be flooded. He knew it would be water-covered at every flood stage when he bought it. A fact that seems almost preposterous when you consider it, but true just the same.

Mr. Meehan has his idea of how the water may be controlled. On the map he pointed it out to us. Whether it is feasible, possible or the best thing to do I am not prepared to say—but this I do truly believe: If there is no way to control this condition which prevails when a warm wind and much rain hits soft snow in the foothills and lower mountain regions, it will be one of the very few problems the Yankee mind has failed to solve!

You can just bet (and win) that there is a way and if you get the right men interested, a way will be found that is practicable. But it takes action. It requires some sacrifice of time. But it should and must be done!

Personally, I have little patience with representatives, whether State or National, who do not take these problems up and handle them for their constituents. I do not understand how a man can hold such an office and overlook these opportunities to do something definite and immeasurably valuable for a community so wonderfully blessed by natural advantages in the way of soil and climate.

Too many of our office holders are content to sit in an easy chair and figure out how they are going to hold their present political job, or be elected to one better. We need more men and women who will try and earn what they are receiving and know in their hearts that their efforts will be appreciated by the folks at home, and if they merit a return to office or a better place at the hands of the people—they will get it.

But why rave about this? The people are more to blame than men in office. We ask little of our representatives—in fact, they have to rus-

tle around to find a bill to introduce. The things we need we do not clamor for—sometimes we do not even hint what we need. And we hand out offices to those who do not need them, or deserve them—and withhold positions from those who are capable and honorable.

Right now there are people who will read this and say, "All bunk! It can't be done."

And they're right. It can't be done by such as they. No great deed, no good cause, no useful invention was ever sponsored or brought into being by those who said, "It can't be done." This thing of diking and dredging may be alright in their places, but there is a more effectual, less expensive and a speedier way of controlling this water problem if Mr. Meehan's theory is worth a whoop! It sounds good and looks good on paper. If this is not the thing to do, and it may not be when looked into by state and government experts, then do that which is feasible—but let's do something.

On our own accord we have had some good pictures taken of the flood waters and the havoc wrought by them—not for publication, bless your hearts, for it is nothing to be proud of, or to be placed to the credit of the locality—but, now is the time to get actual pictures to show the powers that be how essential it is to protect the farmers and business men of this, one of the greatest and most fertile sections of our great state.

Bridges are out, trains cannot operate, mail doesn't get through, metropolitan newspapers are held up, business is suspended, credits endangered which threatens banks and business houses, farmers all but ruined and some financially flattened. All because of too much water; a condition that has been cured in other places, and one not to be given up here as incurable.

You business men; how do you feel about it? Is it right to sit by and say, "Oh, it only happens once in four years, and there isn't anything we can do." Commercial Club, what is the purpose of your organization? To hold a weekly business meeting; a social dance now and then?

Why of course not! We know that you want to get back of this movement and put it over big and at once, while the air is full of the subject and the country is full of the water.

If your representative never saw a real flood here, wire him to come now and see some of the houses turned up side down, houses with the roofs off, side walls caved in, torn from their foundations, furniture ruined, plaster and paper destroyed, barns wrecked, cows, horses, hogs drowned; grain

lost, hay and straw by the tons and tons a total loss—when he looks upon these ruins and contemplates the damage and the state of mind the owner must be in after such an experience, he will act on any suggestion you make—and if he doesn't, with your aid and that of all other organizations you may enlist, then remember his name and his attitude at the next election! You'll get action.

If there's a solitary thing the writer can do in his weak way, not being a resident or citizen of your rich community, just say the word. What has been written above came after a visit around to see the destruction and the pitiful sight of houses wrecked and families homeless, with all their hard work put to naught, and with but little incentive to rebuild their houses and barns, re-sow their grain crops, or prepare new seed beds, when that damnable, powerful enemy, called flood waters, hangs over their heads day and night, threatening to come again and wipe-out their capital and earnings!

What's to be done?

Commercial Club, will you take it up?

Mr. Representative, how about you?

## Auto Traffic Halted

To leave or enter Mount Vernon by auto is a difficult task these days as the highways in all directions are pretty badly flooded, according to reports reaching Miss Beatrice Bell of the Automobile Club of Western Washington.

It is stated, however, that Bellingham may be reached by auto via Clear Lake and Sedro Woolley, thence over the Lake Samish road. Burlington cannot be reached by machine at this time, reports state, even the Avon detour being impassable.

To go to Anacortes means a tedious trip by way of LaConner and across the Indian Reservation road—five miles of very bad going, although the Anacortes stage is making a round trip a day at present by this route.

The highway south of Mount Vernon is still covered by water and to make Everett by machine means traversing the route taken by B. V. Nelson, a story of which appears in another part of this issue of the Argus.

The local office of the Auto club is keeping in constant touch with road conditions and willingly giving out information to all who inquire.