

THE MOUNT VERNON ARGUS

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COLD ADDS TO FLOOD DAMAGE

County Commissioner J. Z. Nelson Says Loss More Than Half Million.

Following close on the heels of the high water which last Tuesday flooded a large area of the fertile Skagit valley, has come a week of extremely cold weather, at least for this country. It has added to the discomfort and in some cases suffering of this section's ranchers. Before all of the water could recede from the lowlands, it had frozen to a depth of two or three inches, and succeeding cold days increased the thickness so that skating has been a pastime all around Mount Vernon. Stock has suffered owing to this cold weather and the inability to get feed to the animals where the barns and fields were surrounded by water. The mercury at nights hovered around 14 and 15 degrees above zero, and Mount Vernon's water pipes began to break.

J. Z. Nelson, member of the board of county commissioners, said yesterday that at first he had placed the amount of damage done to the ranchers, county property, and railroads at about a half million dollars, but since then he had gone over the county pretty well and that he thought it would reach more than this figure.

East Burlington perhaps shows the most damage from the high water where the river overflowed Fairhaven avenue. W. H. Walker's house on the south side of the avenue was overturned and split in two. Mr. Walker was in the house at the time. The force of the concussion turned his bed over, throwing him into about three feet of water. He was rescued in a boat after several hours waiting and calling for help. The Lane dwelling and the Carlson cottage were almost total wrecks, the Carlson house being torn apart and demolished.

Train service over the Great Northern was resumed last night and the mail and freight will be received with somewhat more regularity. It is possible to go on the highway now to Bellingham although the Riverside bridge and the Varney slough bridge are closed to traffic. Detours are being made by way of Clear Lake or Avon. To the south the pavement is open to Milltown if one goes at low tide, according to the county engineer's office. One also can get to Anacortes by going when the tide is out. The breaking of the salt water dikes is causing much delay in opening these roads.

No action has been taken yet by the various diking districts toward repairing the dikes, nor have any meetings been called to discuss future work. Many farmers are talking of calling mass meetings to talk over the question of proper protection from floods and many different theories as to what should be done are being talked on the street corners. Many favor the building of a spillway from the Avon bend to salt water in Padilla bay, while others say that to straighten the river at the Avon bend by cutting a channel through from south of Burlington to a point at Mount Vernon. Others declare that the Skagit river must be dredged from its mouth up to a point above Burlington, and still others say that the Seattle dam at Ruby creek will offer much protection, although when this project will be completed is doubtful.

Many declare that to secure prompt and efficient action regarding flood protection, all drainage and diking districts should be consolidated into one county-wide district with responsible men at the head of it. With such a district, concerted action can be had, it is said, and much of the alleged strife among the various districts will be removed.