

Flood Control, Navigation of Skagit to Be Studied

An emergency meeting of the Skagit County Flood Control Council has been called for Friday at 1:30 p. m. in the small courtroom of the Skagit County courthouse to discuss feasibility of cutting a new channel at the mouth of the Skagit river.

FLOOD CONTROL, NAVIGATION

Supporters of the proposal

claim that a new channel at the North Fork of the river substantially would control flooding in the Skagit flat area and open the river to navigation.

Friday afternoon's session is being called by Earl Hanson, chairman of the Flood Control Council. Official notifications of the meeting are being mailed to Dike and Drainage Commissioners and other interested persons.

The emergency conclave results from a discussion of the new channel proposal held yesterday afternoon in the Skagit County Commissioner's chambers, at which Lowell Hughes, commissioner, presided.

Hughes pointed out that the new channel could be dredged in a westerly direction, taking off from Valentine's Bend, across state owned land and tidal flats, and arriving at deep water, after covering a distance of about four miles.

SHORTER CHANNEL

It was estimated that the new channel would be at least one mile and a half shorter than the present one, and would have the advantage of a sharper slope seaward. This would carry off water more quickly.

County Engineer H. O. Walberg, who was one of nine persons at yesterday's meeting, revealed that the water level was as high at the North Fork bridge during the November 3, 4 and 5 flood threat as it was during the

more severe 1951 flood. Silting at the present mouth was one of the factors which accounted for this.

According to Assistant County Engineer Harold Strombom, 147,000 cubic feet per second of water rolled down the river in 1951 high water, as compared to the lesser figure of 110,000 cubic feet per second in last November's danger period.

Jim Hulbert, LaConner area farmer, estimated that if the proposed channel were cut and training walls erected to confine the flow, that flood danger would be minimized by some two or three feet.

The group agreed that following Friday's flood control council meeting that representatives of the county should present the new river channel proposal in Seattle to Col. Norman A. Matthias, commanding officer of the District Corps of Army Engineers. The date of the meeting and members of the committee have yet to be named.

Others at yesterday's meeting were James Dunlap of LaConner; Ted Reep, president of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce; Ed O'Leary, unofficial spokesman for the Army Engineers; Mount Vernon chamber manager Harvey Davis; Noble Lee, Fir Island dike commissioner and Len Beckley, chairman of the Mount Vernon Chamber's river committee.

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It's Up To Flood Council To Spur Engineers Into Action

Since the first white men settled in the Skagit Valley there has hardly been a more irritating or time-consuming problem than flood control. The river, aptly named Skagit by the Indians, goes on a rampage now and then and in so doing often provides materials that practically choke the stream, thereby setting up the stage for further floods.

On Jan. 5 the Skagit Valley Emergency Flood Control board will meet in Seattle to ask government aid in cutting a new channel at North Fork. No doubt there will be other suggestions at the meeting for more control.

We are indeed fortunate to have on that Control Council men who understand the situation—men like Earl Hanson, Lowell Hughes, Noble Lee, Leo Beckley, Jim Dunlap, Dan Sundquist and Charles Christenson. County Engineer H. O. Walberg will be adviser to the Council.

The recent floods in California should spur this council and the Army Engineers into action. In a way the California disaster provides a blessing in disguise because it points to further trouble unless everything possible is done to prevent such a recurrence here or elsewhere.

Don't think for a minute that "it couldn't happen here." We no longer have the great forests that sop up rain waters and let them seep out slowly. We still have a great expanse of rainshed, regardless of the fact that dams do some good in holding back excessive water.

Every member of the council representing us is cognizant of the conditions here. We hope they can hold the interest of the Army Engineers and in some way impress them with our problem. We are pretty sure they will come to our conclusions if they do a complete survey, as requested.
