

## Power Dams Help Spare Skagit From Flood

Skagit county was not without its high water hard work and individual hardships this week but it could thank a gentler weather man up this way, the Skagit and Baker river dam operators, and the various dike builders, that this area escaped the disaster that befell Snohomish and other counties.

The Skagit watershed didn't receive the extremely heavy rains that those to the south did. It still had an overdose of water, but a considerable amount was held back by City Light and Puget Power dams. So, the river boomed up over the weekend but crested at 24.3 feet Monday night, below the point of great danger.

Residents of the Nookachamps

area took scant solace from the situation, after suffering two backups from the Skagit and seeing many of their farms once more flooded.

### SLIDES UPRIVER

The county engineering department had its troubles, with slides at Rockport and on the Concrete-Darrington road. A big one near the Jim Ovenell farm across the river from Concrete blocked the road, possibly for two or three days. Engineers had to drive to Arlington to reach the site of the Sauk bridge building job, because they couldn't get through from the Skagit end of the road.

### CREEK THREATENS

Dike commissioners kept an eye on their dikes over the

weekend. Farmers along Carpenter creek-hill ditch saw water spill over low bank spots Monday night but none so seriously they couldn't sandbag against it.

It was a close shave for Skagit county that Wednesday's bright skies made it appear was over — unless it warmed to the rapid snow-melting point far upstream.

Seattle City Light's Ross plant was partially shut down from Thursday morning, Nov. 19, to Monday noon of this week to reduce the amount of flood waters in the lower Skagit, Supt. Paul J. Raver advised The Argus. Flow at Ross was cut to the point where even with the additional water from streams feeding into the Skagit below Ross,

no water was spilled over the Gorge diversion dam. The only flow permitted at Newhalem was the normal amount necessary to operate the Gorge power house.

During the Thursday-Monday period level of Ross lake increased 2.33 feet, or by 26,000 acre feet of water. Raver said drawdown of water to produce power was cut by about 6000 acre feet and the lost power replaced by purchase or interchange of about three million kilowatt hours of energy.

A like contribution to Skagit valley flood protection was made by Puget Sound Power & Light company with its two dams on the Baker river, one in use this winter for the first time. Divi-

Continued on Page 8

## 2000-FOOT NEW DIKE TALKED

As much as 2000 feet of new dike and rock revetment may be built along the Mount Vernon waterfront in the near future if talks going on this week mature.

City officials told interested property owners they'd like to see the strip of property the city owns along the highway access road north of the Carnation plant included in a project already well along — a proposed revetting of the old dike from the West Side bridge past Carnation, Lakeside-Western Lumber Co. and the Pearson property immediately north, more than 800 feet. Total of the two would approach 2000 feet.

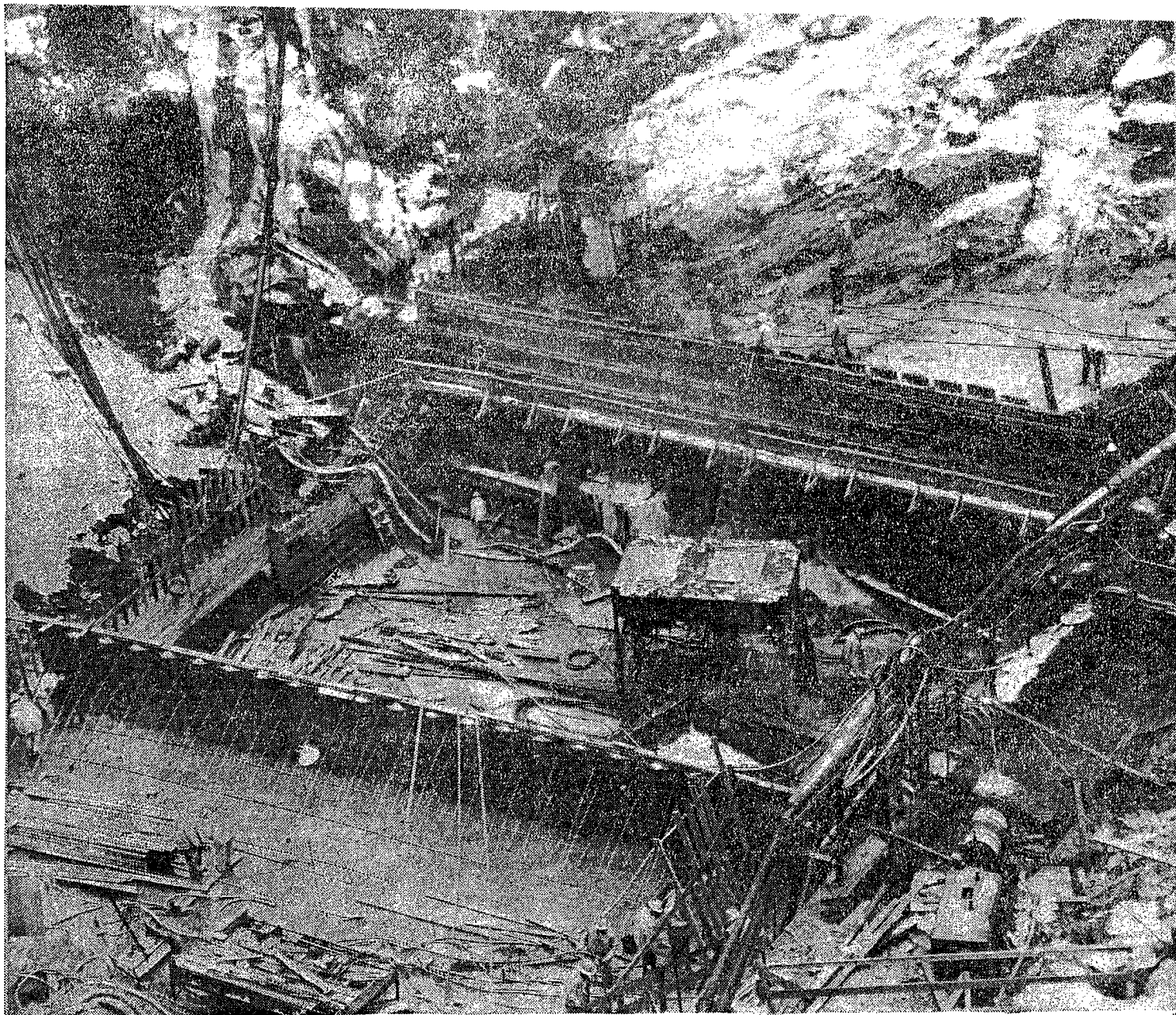
## POWER DAMS HELP SPARE SKAGIT FLOOD

Continued from Page 1

sion Mgr. John Wallin in Bellingham reported to Mount Vernon Mgr. A. B. Loft that Puget also began holding back water early last Thursday and stored 27,000 acre feet of water that ordinarily would have gone on downstream. It closed gates to raise the level at Upper Baker by 5½ feet and at the old Lower Baker dam at Concrete, another foot. By terms of the federal power commission license, the company is not required to use the Baker dams for flood control, but was glad to be able to do so, Wallin said.

# THE MOUNT VERNON ARGUS

11-26-59



**RIVER COULD HAVE THREATENED** — A substantial Skagit area payroll is this work on second stage construction of Seattle City Light's high Gorge dam on the upper Skagit river. Some 300 men have been working around clock, six days a week. Three blocks of concrete have been poured since October 30 to heights of 68, 45 and

60 feet above bedrock. Three hundred foot dam is to be completed in 1960, give City Light an 88 foot higher water level and with power house improvements increase plant capability from 108,000 to 165,000 kilowatts. — Argus Scanagraving.