

## Fisheries Study Promised by U.S. Engineers

Two controversial facets of the Skagit river flood control and navigation surveys now under way were brought out by a recent interview by Rep. Jack Westland with Lt. Col. Joseph F. Garbacz, of the office of Chief of Engineers, in Washington, according to a copy received this week.

As to flood control, Col. Garbacz pointed out that while the proposed Avon by-pass would provide "partial protection," the U. S. engineers felt this and existing levees would not give all the flood protection needed in the lower areas of the Skagit. The "ultimate solution," he said, "is to provide some type of reservoir upstream from the lower valley areas."

### SAUK SITE CONSIDERED

Later in the interview, the Engineers spokesman said superficial examinations had been made on the Sauk river about seven miles upstream from the Skagit as a possible dam site. He called it "premature to say that site is a good site." No test holes have as yet been drilled to see if there is an adequate base for a dam there.

The engineer did not duck the issue of potential damage to fish life from the proposed dredging of the Skagit channel between Mount Vernon and Concrete for barge navigation. Sports groups have voiced great concern that such channel work would ruin spawning grounds and wipe out steelhead and salmon runs in the

river.

### FISH STUDIES PROMISED

Saying he was "a fisherman myself in that area, and I've enjoyed it," Co. Garbacz assured Westland that "we are very much aware of the problem that dredging in that stretch of the river might cause to fishing" and promised that "we will have the fisheries experts of the state and federal agencies go into it a little bit later on . . . We want to know exactly where we stand, and by getting advice and assistance from the state and federal fish people, we feel that we might be able to put in some mitigation of losses that dredging might do."

Present thinking of the engineers is to have a river channel

four to six feet deep and about 100 feet wide.

Noting that the several-times dredged river section from Sedro Woolley or Mount Vernon downstream was "still an excellent steelhead area," Westland asked Garbacz for a comment and received this reply:

**"Dredging along doesn't bother the run so much as it does the spawning of the anadromous (sea-run) fish. This is the particular concern I think that the sportsmen out there have, and so does the Corps (of Engineers)."**

The Skagit county flood control council has been pushing studies and plans for the Avon by-pass, a flood overflow channel from the Skagit river north of Mount Vernon to Padilla bay.