

# THE MOUNT VERNON ARGUS

-- Rescheduled U. S. Engineer Hearing Here Friday Given Letter

JANUARY 9, 1964

The city of Mount Vernon is on record with the U. S. Corps of Engineers as endorsing flood control plans recommended by the Engineers.

This was disclosed to the city council last night by Mayor Herman I. Hanson near the eve of the rescheduled public hearing, now set for 1:30 p. m. Friday of this week at the Elks club in Mount Vernon.

The mayor said he had consulted with City Engr. Denny LeGro and written the approval letter prior to the original hearing date, Nov. 22, canceled by the President's death.

The letter declares the Engineers' proposals for levee and channel improvements "reasonable and practical, . . . assuming that the costs . . . are economically feasible and that suitable and equitable financial arrangements can be achieved . . ."

LeGro said the letter did not express specific approval or disapproval of the controversial Avon bypass plan "because that is not a part of the hearing." It does, however, favor the Engineers' modifications of the bypass plan to include fisheries and recreational facilities.

"If we hadn't had the dike break below us we'd have had it," LeGro commented, as to the 1951 flood.

The letter was pulled from the files and read after a West Side resident, Zell Young, had urged the city to take a stand at Friday's hearing.

Mayor Hanson is a past president of both the Skagit county and the state flood control councils. The full text of his letter to the Engineers is as follows:

## RECALLS 1951 FLOOD

"Mount Vernon residents clearly remember the date of Feb. 10, 1951. The record book shows that on this date the Skagit river reached a flood flow peak of 150,000 c.f.s. (cubic feet per second). But to Mount Vernon residents and the City of Mount Vernon's officials, the peak flood flow of 150,000 c.f.s. was no immediate concern through that long night and the following early morning hours of the next day. What our Mount Vernon officials do remember is that the

Skagit river filled their banks completely in Mount Vernon and that the flood crest rose until the water level had completely covered our revetment area and was lapping at the gutter line of Main street at the Myrtle street intersection. Another six or nine inches would have required sandbags to keep the Skagit river from spilling over into our downtown commercial area.

"Watching the river crest at flood stage was not all our townspeople had on their minds, however. The city officials had serious problems with their sewer system — as our Park street sewer main collapsed inside of our protective shutoff gates but outside the dike, and flooded back into the residential area in the southwest section of our town, lifting manhole covers and flooding streets and homes, until the sewer break could be found and the sewer line sealed off by dumping truck loads of sand bags into a manhole to plug the sewer main.

"And at our sewerage treatment pumping station, city officials found it impossible to pump the resultant sewage and storm waters against the head of the raging Skagit river.

## STORE OWNERS PREPARE

"Neither will our store owners soon forget their preparatory efforts as they frantically elevated all of their stock in case the stores and storage rooms should be inundated.

"With the memory of this 1951 flood and the 1949 flood of 140,000 c.f.s. fresh in our minds, it is not difficult for the city of Mount Vernon to evaluate its position as regards this hearing.

"The city of Mount Vernon lies behind the protective dikes of four separate diking districts: Diking Districts No. 1, 3, 17 and 20. And we are certainly pleased that we can take this opportunity to support the diking district commissioners from these four diking districts in heartily endorsing their majority approval of these recommended flood control plans by the Corps of Engineers.

"The city of Mount Vernon, with full knowledge of what a flood flow of 150,000 c.f.s. means to our city, hereby congratulates

the Corps of Engineers for their comprehensive and forward-thinking flood prevention plan.

"Assuming that the costs of these levee and channel improvements are economically feasible and that suitable and equitable financial arrangements can be achieved, this overall flood control plan calling for a total flood control capacity of 180,000 c.f.s. seems reasonable and practical.

## 'STRONG FEATURE'

"One of the strong features of this program is to uniform the degree of levee protection along the entire length of the Skagit river. Many of us hope that once this degree of uniformity is achieved, that a centralized or coordinated control group can be set up to ensure that this uniformity does not once again disintegrate through the process of well-meaning but uncoordinated far-flung groups of concern. If this means redistricting at some future date, then we should approach this problem openly and without petty personal malice.

"It would further appear that the possible modifications of the Avon bypass structure to permit the additional purposes of fisheries and recreational facilities, do not endanger the overall comprehensive flood control plan, nor are material sums involved in the costs thereof. The city of Mount Vernon would therefore be favorable to the inclusion of this recommendation also in our approval.

## UPSTREAM STORAGE

"And in conclusion, with the achievement of all the plans presently under consideration for flood control on the Skagit river, that the comprehensive development of upstream storages on the various tributaries of the Skagit river, can give our fertile valley a virtual freedom from the danger of floods — and possibly in our lifetime.

"We think this plan has merit. We think it is reasonable. We think the people of Skagit county have the courage and ability to put it over.

"For the City of Mount Vernon.  
"Herman I. Hanson, Mayor."