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## ENGINEER'S REPORT GIVES HISTORY OF FLOODS ON SKAGIT

### REPORT GOES BACK TO 1815—SIX BIG FLOODS SINCE 1896—HE SAYS FLOOD PREVENTION WOULD BE COSTLY

James E. Stewart, government hydraulic engineer, who was employed nearly two years ago by Skagit county to make a survey of flood conditions along the Skagit River, has just submitted a report on his findings on the stage and volume of past floods in the Skagit Valley and advisable protective measures to be undertaken prior to the construction of permanent flood controlling works. The report is comprehensive and goes back to floods told of by Indians dating back as far as 1815. The report as a whole is interesting to the people of the valley but is too long to publish in full.

"Since the arrival of the first white people in the valley, about 1869," says Mr. Stewart, "there have been six Skagit river floods whose discharge has exceeded 175,000 second feet at Sedro-Woolley. All of these floods have occurred since November 15, 1896. The number of floods that exceeded 175,000 second feet prior to 1869 is unknown, but the occurrence of two great floods has been discovered, but their stages and volume have been accurately determined. The maximum floods which have occurred in the past have had about twice the discharge of the flood of 1921." Then follows data on the floods taken at various places along the river. This data shows that the flood of 1921 was the second largest since 1869, being exceeded by that of 1909.

Data shows that heavy floods have

occurred in 1896, 1897, 1906, 1909, 1917 and 1921. The problem of climatic conditions is being studied in hopes that the study will throw some light on the frequency of certain sized floods in the past and future. Judging from past floods, Mr. Stewart says that floods like those of 1917 and 1921 may be expected within the next five or six years.

Mr. Stewart says that while the flood situation in the valley is serious the county should not be stampeded into the construction of expensive flood construction works. Practically all work along this line would be very expensive and would have very little value in case of a maximum flood.

He suggested as inexpensive measures that would prove beneficial the diking of the Nookachamps district, the removal of drift from the river channel below Hamilton and near Lyman and protective dikes at Burlington and possibly at Mt. Vernon. He says that while a maximum flood has not occurred for nearly 100 years, it might occur again and that flood warning stations should be maintained along the river. The report says that Burlington and Hamilton would be in danger from a flood of any size and Mt. Vernon is in danger from backwash in case of a large flood. The report contains a mass of data collected at various points along the river, and says that much more data must be compiled before effective flood prevention measures can be undertaken.