

# Need For Flood Control

## Federal And State Aid At Stake In Election Planning Council Says

A statement pointing out the need for organizing a flood control district in Skagit county, upon which the eligible voters residing east of Swinomish channel will make a decision December 3, was issued today by the Skagit county planning council. Members of the council are: R. V. Welts, chairman; Grant Sisson, secretary; J. H. Hulbert, Harold McFarlane, Peter Lee, James T. Ovenell, W. R. Morgan, Carol Brider, J. H. Smith, State Senator W. J. Knutzen, A. G. Mosier, Ed Schwartz, Clyde F. Shrauger.

The planning council points out in its statement that the county has been unable to solve the flood problem for more than fifty years, and that with the organization of a district, Skagit county will be in a position to receive assistance from the state and federal governments, without which a permanent solution cannot be arrived at.

Full text of the council's statement follows:

The Planning Council believes the formation of our flood control district is the most important thing this county has attempted to do. The Skagit and Samish rivers have always presented a serious problem. Through the years, instead of growing better, the dangers have constantly increased. Something must be done or the entire valley faces disaster. In the past we have tried to work single-handed. This has failed.

### Can't Succeed Alone

The land in this valley has been reclaimed from overflow by rivers and salt water at tremendous cost. Fifty years ago the individual tried to dike and drain his land. In a few years he learned that he could not succeed alone. His neighbors joined with him and formed dike and drainage districts designed to protect and reclaim small isolated units. Neighboring farmers formed similar districts; each trying to protect its property, regardless of what happened to the adjoining district. We now have 27 independent diking and drainage units. Through the years they have spent over \$1,000,000 of the taxpayers' money for protection.

The fertility of the land in this valley is without comparison. We have, as we know, one of the most highly developed communities in the Northwest. It has been built up through the expenditure of millions upon millions of dollars. We have recently realized, through the flood of two years ago, when over 20,000 acres were under salt water, and through the fact that each winter we now have floods from the Skagit and Samish rivers, that we must have help.

### Cities Are Menaced

As we have been building our dikes, the timber has been logged from our hills. They are now bare. They no longer hold back the rainfall and melting snow. This water comes into the rivers more rapidly than before. At Hamilton, Lyman, Sterling and a hundred other places on both the Skagit and Samish the rivers are each year washing away acres upon acres of land. This silt has filled up the mouths of the rivers and the river beds. The dikes cannot hold back the flood waters. Each year this condition is growing worse. The entire farming area and the existence of towns such as Mount Vernon, Burlington, Lyman, Hamilton is jeopardized. At Sterling the Skagit has so changed its course and is so rapidly cutting away the river bank that it will soon force a new channel north of Burlington through the farming country to salt water. If you do not believe it, go and look. Something must be done and it must be done at once or the whole valley will face disaster. What can we do?

A half century of experience has

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## FEDERAL AND STATE AID TO BE AT STAKE

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man who has an investment in Skagit county because the life and continued existence of the entire community is dependent upon its solution. The man in town cannot make a living by selling his goods or services to the farmer or his neighbor, unless that farmer or neighbor can live and produce wealth with which to buy. The schools cannot operate unless there are roads and bridges permitting travel. The manufacturer, the shipper, the business man cannot exist unless the agencies of transportation are functioning. The life of the whole community is so interwoven that an impending community disaster affects the life, investment, the business and prosperity of every member of the community. This is not the farmers' problem; it is the problem of all of us and experience has taught us that we must act together or all suffer loss.

### Laws Are Passed

This condition is common to all of western Washington. Realizing that something must be done, the last legislature passed a series of laws known as the flood control legislation, which permits formation of large flood control districts practically county-wide. On December 3 the residents of the mainland of Skagit county will vote on the formation of that territory into a flood control district.

The state has recognized the necessity for such districts. It has realized that the flood control district, when formed, must have outside financial help. The state has laid the foundation for the grant of state aid to these districts, when formed. The federal government has recognized the fact that the problem of controlling rivers is too large even for the community or the state to handle and is entering this field and lending federal help. Before we can expect any continued assistance from the state government or the federal government, there must be some local agency to handle the local problem. The federal government does not recognize and will not recognize an application of an individual for flood control aid. The existing dike and drainage units are so small and so scattered that neither the state nor the federal government will recognize them as agencies through which to work in attacking a problem involving a whole valley or a whole river. Realizing that state and federal aid would be forthcoming, the legislature has set up the machinery for the creation of a district large enough to work through and large enough to contain within its borders the whole community imperilled by some river or rivers. It is the logical and sensible way to attack such a problem. We can't expect state aid or federal aid unless we are interested and help ourselves. If we express that willingness by uniting together, the state and federal government is willing to help. These are not idle words, because, looking toward the ultimate solution of these matters, the various flood control agencies and the state of Washington in conjunction with similar action on the part of other states has resulted in the federal government using money to start flood control work. We have a definite appropriation from the federal government amounting to nearly \$400,000 for work on the

Skagit and Samish rivers in this county. That will undoubtedly be followed by additional help if we have a district which is trying to help itself and can serve as an agency through which the state and federal government will continue to act. We feel that it is imperative that this outside aid to be obtained and be continued and the best we can do is to organize ourselves and keep faith with those agencies which are trying to help us.

The proposed district upon which you will vote December 3, embraces all of Skagit county except Fidalgo Island. To avoid the cost of setting up new machinery and a completely new set of officers, the law makes the three men elected as county commissioners, by vote of that election, the directors of the district. The law specifically limits the power of the district, when formed, to tax any land. This act reads:

"Any flood control district may raise revenue by the levy of an annual tax on all taxable property within such district, such levy to be made and taxes collected at the same time and in the same manner now or hereafter provided by law or the levy and collection of county taxes, such levy not to exceed 2 mills on the dollar in any one year."

### Tax Is Small

If you live in town and own a home which carried on the tax roll at a taxable valuation of \$1,000, that means the flood control dis-

# MOUNT VERNON DAILY HERALD

district, through its directors, has no power to tax your property more than \$2 in any one year. If you are a store keeper, a dentist, a doctor or other professional man, how long would it take you to lose \$2 if a flood paralyzed the trade in this valley or prevented 500 farmers from operating their farms? How long would it take you to lose \$2 if Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, Hamilton, Lyman, Mount Vernon were flooded by the Skagit river? If you have an investment in farm mortgages, that investment should be worth protecting.

We wish to point out that the taxpayer is spending many times the amount of money that can be involved in the formation of the district or its continued existence, but he does not know it. In 1909, the flood in this valley did approximately \$1,000,000 of damage. In 1917, the damage was at least \$500,000. Similarly, in 1920, and all of the other floods, the cost has been hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars. The highway department estimates the damage from floods during the past year cost \$1,000,000. In 1917, the county, because of flood, spent over \$100,000 in repairing bridges and highways. Mr. Taxpayer, you paid the bill. You will continue to pay the bill until this problem is solved. There has never been a flood in this valley that has not cost the county itself, for road and bridge and highway repair, at least \$25,000. Do you know what that means? It means that if this flood control district is formed, and through its efforts and the help of the state and federal government, a program is laid out and carried out through a period of years whereby the banks of the rivers are protected, the dikes on all water fronts are adequately built up and taken care of, the channels are kept open adequately, the most it can possibly cost the taxpayer, if the very maximum of levy is made, is 2 mills on the dollar, which, in round figures, is approximately \$25,000 in the entire county. You are spending more than that in the levies for roads, bridges and highways each time a flood occurs.

## No Bond Issues Involved

This vote is solely for the purpose of determining whether a district will be formed. No bond issue is involved; no bonds can be issued under the law unless at a later date a plan is submitted to the district and the voters expressly vote to issue bonds. In all probability that will not arise. If it does it is something separate and apart and can be voted upon according to its merits when it comes about. This election is merely for the formation of a district. No tax levy beyond 2 mills can be made by the directors under the law, without submitting the matter to a vote of the district so formed. So the question is, should we unite and form a district to govern our county-wide problem and serve as an agency through which state and federal authorities may act. There is an erroneous idea that the district, when formed, will have to pay one-fourth of the cost of all work. This is not true. For instance: the federal government is spending nearly \$400,000 and the district, or the county, if we call it such, is spending nothing except certain supervision, furnishing of certain tools and the like. Our rivers are among the worst in the state. It stands to reason that if we create a district we will be in a position to get very substantial state and federal aid if we show a willingness to do something ourselves. We can't do it alone; our past efforts have failed and we feel that we should try to get as much help as possible to save the investments we have.

## Levy Is Explained

The fact that the directors have power to levy 2 mills does not mean that they must levy that much. That is the most they can levy in any one year. If they levy 2 mills it would mean approximately \$25,000 on the entire county. It does not mean that money will be spent immediately, but a fund can be created as an emergency and reserve fund to be used when and where it becomes most necessary to use it, and we will not be powerless when an emergency arises. The ultimate solution of this problem is going to require the coordinated effort of the local district, the state and the federal government. A comprehensive plan will be laid out under adequate engineering direction and then all agencies will work toward the accomplishment of that plan. Before the taxpayer is called upon to stand any additional financing he will have a chance to vote on the matter. We feel that the law has safeguarded the taxpayer so that no large expenditure can be placed upon him without his vote and that is not involved in the formation of this district.

## Will Pay Anyway

We wish to call to the attention of the taxpayer the fact that adjoining counties are forming districts. If Whatcom county forms a district and Snohomish county forms a district, but Skagit county refuses to do so, Skagit county is nevertheless paying its part of the bill for state and federal help, but is getting nothing.

We feel that this is the first time throughout our history that

a broad, sensible plan has been formulated under which we can unite together and get adequate aid from the state and the United States, intelligently to solve our most important common problem. We urge that this district be formed in order that our tax dollars may be used to the greatest advantage and so that we may get the maximum of help from other agencies.

Skagit County Planning Council.

# MOUNT VERNON DAILY HERALD

## HAGGEN and CLARK

CASH STORES  
507 FIRST STREET MOUNT VERNON

*Jif's*

BLEND

49-LB. SACK . . . . \$1.95

*Libby's*

Pineapple Juice

3 CANS . . . . 25c

Libby's Sauerkraut Juice. No. 2½ Can . . . 13c

SUGAR Pure Cane 49c  
10 Lbs. . . . .  
100 Lbs. . . . . \$4.89

Waverly—Made by Rockwood's  
COCOA 2 Lb. Tin 15c

Brown Sugar lb. 5c

CRISCO 6 Lbs . . . 1.09

GINGER SNAPS . . . . 4 Doz. 15c  
FRESH, CRISP, OLD FASHIONED MOLASSES COOKIES

CORN STARCH . . . 1½-Lb. Pkg. 10c  
STALEY'S — FINEST OBTAINABLE

RAISINS . . . . . 4-Lb. Pkg. 19c  
NEW CROP THOMPSON SEEDLESS

BUY BULK GOODS IN CLEAN, SANITARY CELLOPHANE

PEELS—Lemon, Orange, and Citron.  
Lb. . . . . 29c

GLAZE PINEAPPLE or CHERRIES—  
½-Lb. Pkg. . . . . 23c

CURRENTS—  
Fresh, Clean. Lb. . . . 19c

WALNUT MEATS—New crop Diamond  
No. 1. ½-lb. Pkg. . . . 25c

SUN-MAID PUFFED RAISINS—  
2-Lb. Pkg. . . . . 19c

DATES—New Crop, Fresh and Clean. . . . . 2 Lbs. 15c

WHITE KING

TOILET SOAP

4 BARS . . . . 19c

WASHING POWDER

LARGE PKG. . . . . 29c

ROYAL GELATIN



All Flavors

PKG.

5c