

COUNTY BOARD HEARS APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

MEMBERS OF PLANNING COUNCIL WANT WORKERS FROM LESS IMPORTANT PROJECTS ON FLOOD CONTROL

Fighting for more relief workers to carry out the flood control projects in Skagit county, members of the Skagit county planning commission appeared before the board of county commissioners yesterday afternoon and requested that the more important projects in the county be given priority. They asked the commissioners to make a review of the existing projects, weed out the less important ones and assign these men to the flood control project.

The commissioners took the plea under consideration and announced they would try to work out the best possible arrangement for all projects.

Spokesmen for the planning council were R. V. Welts, president, and State Senator W. J. Knutzen.

Mr. Welts presented a detailed list of the projects in the county, showing the men needed on them and the men actually working. This table of projects appears elsewhere on this page.

He explained that the Skagit river flood control project is not set up under the WPA, but is handled directly by the U. S. army engineering department. It calls for the use of 200 men, but it has been undermanned from the start, the number varying from 20 to the present employment of 100.

The commissioners were told that there are about 75 extra men in Anacortes that could be used elsewhere if they were not needed for existing jobs. In addressing the county commissioners, the planning council spokesmen said they were presenting their views solely in the hope that something could be done to hurry along the more important projects. Flood control on the Skagit and Samish rivers is the most important public matter now before the county, it was argued.

A large delegation of farmers residing south of Mount Vernon was present at the hearing and urged that every consideration be given the south ditch project. Ninety men will be needed on this project, it was said. Planning council members pointed out that it might be possible, as long as the sponsors of the ditch project had transportation facilities for 45 men, to transfer Anacortes laborers to and from the project.

Commissioner John Mason said

Flood Project

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definitely that he was going to see the ditch project through "if they hang me for it." He said he would approve nothing that would jeopardize this project.

Chairman Hugo Bauman of the commissioners indicated that in his district some men may be switched to the river force, and Commissioner Wallace Sharpe indicated that if there are extra men in his district, he will be glad to have them used elsewhere if it can be arranged.

Senator Knutzen maintained that \$300,000 had been allocated for river control work, "which is the one project of widest county importance, and it should have the percentage of labor used there that the \$300,000 bore to the total money involved in all the county projects." He did not think the river work is getting its proper proportion of men.

The planning council, at a meeting Wednesday night, discussed ways and means to procure labor to start the Samish project. An allocation of more than \$200,000 has been made for use on the Skagit, and more than \$100,000 for repair and protection work on the Samish. Until the work on the Skagit is completed or more men are available, the army engineering department feels that it is not good business to try to start the Samish project, the planning council was told.

The council has therefore determined to endeavor to get a transient camp established on the Samish.

It was pointed out at the meeting that the trouble in Skagit county at the present time is the fact that only slightly more than 700 men were on the relief rolls between May and November, thus only that number is eligible for work. Most of the projects undertaken call for the use of more men than has been assigned to them.