

COUNTY HOPES FOR START ON RIVER PROJECT

COMMISSIONER MASON SEES
END OF DIFFICULTIES, BUT
HE SAYS COUNTY CAN'T
MAINTAIN PROJECT

J. T. Mason, chairman of the board of county commissioners, said today he thought "everything will be all ironed out in the near future," so that a start can be made on the new Skagit river flood control project. The WPA has allotted more than \$420,000 for the new project, which includes bank revetment work at strategic points along the entire river.

Complaint was made at a recent meeting of the Skagit county chamber of commerce by A. H. Ward of Sedro-Woolley, that the project is being held up because the county has refused to provide draglines, and because the county has refused to agree to maintain the project.

"There is no controversy so far as the commissioners are concerned," stated Mr. Mason when called by the Daily Herald. "We haven't refused to cooperate," he explained, "and I'm sure we'll go just as far as possible to bring about the start of work. There is a limit to what we can do, however, and we must be sure of our ground before we attempt anything."

Mason said the county is ready with its 20 per cent of the cost of the project, and that it has a first class dragline, which was used on the old river project, ready for use. At the chamber of commerce meeting, Ward declared the army engineers were waiting for a new dragline and for a county guarantee of maintenance.

The chairman of the commissioners said maintenance of the project is a big problem. The cost would be practically prohibitive, according to his viewpoint. Also, if the county agreed to maintain the project, he thinks the county might be liable for damages to property should the bank revetment go out and wash away property. Then also, if the county maintains the improvement in any one place, it would be expected to maintain it all up and down the river, and the county has no money for that purpose and no prospect of getting any, according to Mason.

He was optimistic, however, about the prospects of reaching an understanding in the near future, so that work on the river project can get under way.

"The commissioners aren't trying to block this project; we're for it and want work to start right away, but at the same time we must look out for the interests of the entire county," explained Mr. Mason.

When the new project starts, it is expected repair crews will be sent to places near Sedro-Woolley where log tows have damaged the work done under the old project. It has been suggested that piles be driven in the future to protect the revetment work.