

Valley gets head start on high water

The Skagit Valley got an early start last night in combatting any possible dangers from rising rivers and creeks.

By early evening, four members of a flood-fighting team dispatched by the United States Army Corps of Engineers had established themselves at a headquarters in the Courthouse at Mount Vernon. Two of them were sent soon afterwards to the Jackman Creek area east of Concrete, where rain-swollen waters had backed up onto Highway 17-A.

EARLY THIS morning, all four Army Corps representatives were in the Jackman Creek area, helping patch a break in a dike. Sandbagging crews went to work on the broken dike almost in-

stantly after the break was spotted late last night. Unofficial reports early this morning said the dike had been repaired.

Fred Metzger, of Seattle, a spokesman for the Engineers' flood team, said he expected the Skagit River to crest in Mount Vernon at 24 feet about 8 p.m. today. Similarly, Metzger reported Army flood experts had forecast a crest of 33 feet at Concrete at 6 a.m. today.

Heavy rains and unseasonably-high temperatures had swelled the Skagit well above its normal level in the upper Valley yesterday. At 1 p.m., when flood readings began, the river stood in Concrete at 26.85 feet. At 6:30 p.m., the Concrete reading was 28.09 feet.

Then at 7 o'clock last night, three gates at Baker Dam, normally closed from Friday evening through Sunday evening, were opened. Engineers at the dam immediately forecast a normal river rise of half a foot.

THEN HALF a foot and additional water created by downpours of rain in the upper Valley served to increase the river's level to 29.27 feet by 8:30 last night.

Early this morning, at 12:30 a.m., the Skagit County Sheriff's office reported the Skagit at Concrete had hit 30.08 feet—less than three feet below its predicted 6 a.m. crest of 33 feet.

In Mount Vernon, at the Moose Hall on the Revetment, the Skagit rose from 17.5 feet at 3:30 p.m. to 20.4 feet at 12:30 this morning. Mount Vernon police and the State Patrol were taking periodic readings.

Out in the Nookachamps area east of Mount Vernon, where residents have grown accustomed to at least one period of high water each year, cattle were being driven out of low-lying areas early last evening. Some householders were removing articles stored in basements and disassembling furnaces located in basements.

EARLY THIS morning, some pastures lying in the Nookachamps basin were under water, but all roads in the area were still passable.

There was little or no alarm in the Skagit Valley last night over prospects of crests along the Skagit River and its tributaries. Despite water overflowing Jackman Creek, Highway 17-A was still reported open east of Concrete. Neither the State Patrol nor the Skagit County Sheriff's Office had any plans for more than routine

Neither the State Patrol nor the Skagit County Sheriff's Office had any plans for more than routine patrols, and neither had any calls for assistance at all last night or early this morning.

In Whatcom County, some areas near Marietta were reported under water. At 1:30 a.m. today, the Associated Press in Seattle reported little alarm over flooding prospects north of Seattle but some concern over the Olympic Peninsula, where downpours of rain had forced streams to flood stage.

Metzger told the Herald that his flood-fighting team of Army Engineers is working in co-operation with Skagit County's Civil Defense chief Roland Thomas and with flood co-ordinator Lloyd Johnson. He said the team's purpose merely is to be available for assistance if it is needed.

METZGER reported the problem at Jackman Creek is largely one of debris piling up in the creek beneath a Great Northern Railway trestle. He said the railway hoped to dispatch a large crane to the trestle this morning to clear away the debris.

Mount Vernon itself apparently faces no immediate flood threat, Metzger indicated. He said normal flood stage in the area along the city's dike is 28 feet.

husband, 34, the driver of the station wagon, had a knee bruise.

Skagit Valley Hospital attendants had no immediate report on the condition of the Weidkamps late last night.

Their 1955 station wagon collided with an automobile driven by Mrs. Ernest F. Johnson, 72, of 1627 Douglas St., Mount Vernon. Mrs. Johnson was eastbound on the Hickok Road. The Weidkamps were northbound on Highway 99.

DAMAGE TO both automobiles was extensive.

Two other children, their mother and a friend were hurt at 6:15 p.m. Saturday when a car operated by the mother plowed into a tree at Mount Vernon's Hillcrest Park.