

River Vessel To Continue Skagit Trips

The stern-wheeler river boat, the Skagit Chief, will continue to ply the waters of the Skagit River indefinitely, according to word received today by the Skagit County commissioners.

The letter spiked rumors that the Skagit River Navigation and Trading Co. intended to replace its stern-wheeler river boat with a diesel tug and barges.

Commissioner Lowell Hughes wrote a letter to the company asking about their future plans as a result of a meeting held Feb. 14 with Army Engineers in an attempt to determine how high the new North Fork bridge over the Skagit River should be.

It was brought out at that meeting that lowering the height of the fixed-span bridge from 55 to 36 feet would reduce the cost of construction some \$58,000. However, it also was noted that the Skagit Chief and some types of pile drivers and dredges required a 55-foot clearance height in order to enter the river beneath the bridge.

H. E. Grimison of the river navigation company said in part in his letter:

"It is our intention to indefinitely continue operating using our present equipment. We might also point out that, even though we should switch to the use of barges at a future date, the height of the clearance would not be materially altered, inasmuch as the freight elevator on a barge would be approximately as high as our vessels."

Commissioner Hughes said the thinking of those connected with the new bridge seems to favor keeping the 55-foot clearance height. He said no formal application to get a permit from the Army Engineers to build the bridge has been made yet.