

Not Worried About Flood

Bulson Scoffs At Snow Pack

BY KEN FLEMING
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As the warm weather spreads throughout the Skagit Valley this week residents greeted it with mixed emotions—joy that Spring is arriving and fear that a heavy snow pack in the Cascade Mountains might melt rapidly and cause a sudden spring flood.

To 88-year-old E. E. Bulson, a Skagit County pioneer, such fears, however, are not justified.

"Only a strong, hot wind from the southwest will cause a really serious flood situation," he says. "Otherwise I think we will make out all right."

Knows Rivers

And Bulson is a man who knows mighty rivers as a "white water logger," boat operator, and farmer, both in the Mid-West and West Coast.

He came to Skagit County in 1892 and has been farming off and on in the Conway area area since that time. He will be 89 on May 9.

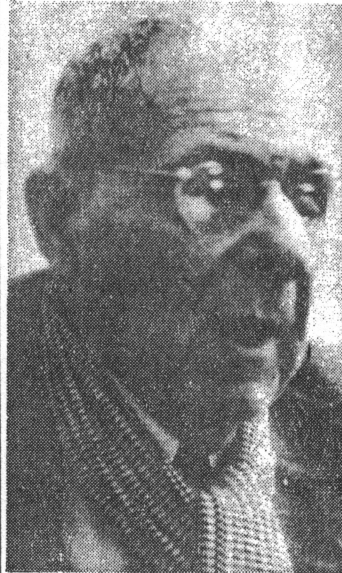
His memory reaches back some six decades when the Skagit River had few if any of the controls that it now has in dikes, revetments, and dams.

Ground Damp

"When you farmed on Fir Island in those days, the ground was always wet. It was so wet that we had to put 'tooley shoes' on the horses' hooves to keep them from sinking into the mud. What are tooley shoes? Well, they were round pieces of board that were fastened to the hooves kind of like a snowshoe. When it was real wet down there we used to kid each other and say we had to put tooley shoes on our wives when they went outside," Bulson recollected.

As to predictions of a possible spring flood by the weather bureau in Portland and state authorities, Bulson remains unimpressed.

He can remember the year that they had seven floods on Fir Island in the month of January. Then, too, there was the big flood in 1893 when the river became clogged with logs from



E. E. BULSON

... used tooley shoes

Scorndal Slough for three solid miles backed up to Mann's Landing.

Worked on Jams

Bulson, a former "white water man" from Michigan where he worked on log jams on the White River near Muskegon, was contacted by a "fellow name of Hanson for the Tacoma Boom Company to help break up that drift . . . we worked until the next spring with a donkey engine on a scow pulling logs out on that jam."

What if a flood does come to the Skagit Valley?

"We can all turn out and man the dikes liwe we used to do and work shoulder to shoulder," the pioneer asserted.

However, Bulson does believe that there would be less danger of a flood if certain improvements were made on the south fork of the Skagit.

Remove Pilings

"All those old pilings should be taken out. They act like a dam and those jams in Steamboat Slough should be cleared out also," Bulson added.

Still alert, of good eye, and keen mind, Bulson has taken it upon himself to personally inspect many of the Skagit's dikes and report to Skagit County Engineer H. O. Walberg on their condition.

Engineer Walberg has spent many hours with the elderly gentleman recording historical facts about previous floods and high water marks in the county.