

# Interesting Quotes From 1/10/64 Corps of Engineers Public Hearing on Avon Bypass.

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Water is our greatest asset. In that same form, and in the twinkling of an eye, it becomes our greatest enemy. . . . We must disagree because, out of disagreement, the man that has an idea of the right attack must impress this point in a debating situation. He wins his argument because of its factual representation and its truth over an opinion that may have come from not having the right facts. . . . From an unknown period, likely at the turn of the century, when diking was first commenced for the private landowners' immediate benefit to a group enterprise, up to 1947, the districts and/or their individual landowners and farmers, cooperating together, spent approximately two million three hundred fifty, sixty thousand dollars on the dikes. . . . Since 1943 the State, helping Skagit County and these some odd sixteen diking districts and some twenty-five or so drainage districts, we together have spent a million three hundred thousand dollars, making approximately a total of three million six hundred sixty thousand dollars together during this century on these levees from approximately Sterling Bend at Burlington to the mouth of both forks. . . . "Every man is entitled to his own opinion, but he is not entitled to form it on the basis of wrong acts." . . . We are now at a time here when we must decide, do we continue this ineffectual and inefficient method of maintaining a substandard set of works, or stop that type of a program and improve our worth and net assets by doing something that's comprehensive and lasting and not be faced with this annual fear that these substandard dikes are going to be topped, your home lost. Greg Hastings, Supervisor of Flood Control, Dept. of Conservation, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass.

This project needs a lot of study and consideration on your part; but when the time comes for the raising of money on a local participation, we want to assure you that the people and taxpayers of Skagit County will have the right to vote on this problem, so we urge you to study it very thoroughly and make up your minds and then decide whether you want to approve or reject this project when the time comes. Scott Richards, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass

During my life time I have observed flooding of all the towns of Skagit County, from Edison to Stanwood, and I feel sure that history will repeat this disaster if steps are not taken to prevent it. . . . New developments and the potential increased population in Skagit County certainly justifies the Bypass with its accompanying improvements. James Hulbert Sr., Fir Island Farmer, and Dike Commissioner of Several Dike Districts during the last Fifty Years, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass

The results of this investigation indicate that the Department feels that they would not be permitted to use motor vehicle funds to support the construction on this improvement. The reason for that decision is that a review of our repair work on our highways through this area during the past years does not disclose that we have had any appreciable costs in



maintenance or repairs. Paul J. McKay, State Highway Department, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass (See also 1/10/1964 [Various Exhibits Submitted to USACOE at Public Hearing](#))

Mount Vernon residents clearly remember the date of Feb. 10, 1951. The record book shows that on this date the Skagit River reached a flood flow peak of 150,000 c.f.s. But to Mount Vernon residents and the City of Mount Vernon's officials, the peak flood flow of 150,000 c.f.s. was of no immediate concern through that long night and the following early morning hours of the next day. That our Mount Vernon officials do remember is that the Skagit River filled their banks completely in Mount Vernon and that the flood crest rose until the water level had completely covered our revetment area and was lapping at the gutter line of Main Street at the Myrtle Street intersection. Another 6 or 9 inches would have required sand-bags to keep the Skagit River from spilling over into our downtown commercial area. . . . We think this plan has merit. We think it is reasonable. We think the people of Skagit County have the courage and ability to put it over. Gwynne D. Legro, Mt. Vernon City Engineer on behalf of Herman I. Hanson, Mayor, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass

When the water is in your house so deep that all you can see is the key board on the piano and all the residue from the septic tank floats back up in your house makes a mess that when you have to clean up once you will never forget. . . . Mother nature is one thing that we cannot tell ahead what it is going to do or fight. Just do the best we can and prepare all we can ahead of time. So lets get this flood control program going just as SOON AS POSSIBLE before we have any more floods. George Kimble, Farmer, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass

In our interim report on Skagit Basin, now under review in our Regional Office, we will recommend that [enhancement of both fish and wildlife resources become purposes of the project](#); and that Washington Department of Game in cooperation with other agencies manage Avon Bypass as a public hunting and fishing area, except such portions as may be reserved for other purposes. Washington Department of Fisheries has expressed an interest in a portion of the bypass as a salmon propagating or rearing area. If this proves feasible, we will recommend that part of the west end of the channel be reserved for their use. . . . Skagit River is the most important producer of salmon in the State of Washington outside the Columbia River, and regularly ranks first in number of steelhead trout caught in the state. It is of vital concern to the citizens of Washington, and of the nation, that runs of these anadromous species be maintained. . . . Management of Avon Bypass for public hunting and fishing, as well as for other recreational purposes, with additions to the planned flood control facilities as recommended by Washington Departments of Fisheries and Game and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, will add substantially to the resource value of the region and will contribute to the economy of the surrounding area. Charles Simmons, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass



The Skagit River is the most important producer of winter run steelhead in the State of Washington. It produces an average catch of 15,686 winter steelhead each year with a record catch of 22,488 in the 1955-56 season. The river provides an average of 84,700 man-days of fishing each year during the winter season. The Skagit is also an important producer of sea-run cutthroat, dolly varden, whitefish and resident species of trout. . . . The Skagit Game Range, for example, located between Freshwater and Steamboat Sloughs provided a kill of 19,184 ducks, geese and pheasants in 1962 and provided 18,631 man-days of hunting. This game range had a larger kill of waterfowl and provided a greater number of man-days of waterfowl hunting than any other game range in the state.

Rolf Larsen, Washington State Dept. of Game, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass

The undersigned violently object and oppose any attempt to fasten this project with the Avon By-Pass and make it an integral part of the Avon By-Pass, feeling that the two are not necessarily related or correlated. . . . the total expenditure for the project is too great to be borne by the area affected and that this burden would be oppressive. The undersigned object to the Avon-By-Pass Project for the reason that it would not materially decrease the present expenditure for flood control and dike and drainage maintenance presently budgeted. The undersigned object to the Avon By-Pass for the added reason that it increases the flood exposure, particularly in the area served by Dike District No. 12. All that area adjacent to the By-Pass will necessarily have to be protected against major flood danger. The undersigned further object to the attempt to link flood control with recreation improvements because there is no attempt to deal with the problems of sanitation, maintenance of the preserve or orderly development. The idea is simply thrown out as an attraction to gain the support of the people in the area. Testimony of Walter Derline, Jr. Esq. on behalf of Dike District 12 Commissioners, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass

It is the position of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the members of the Swinomish Reservation, Skagit County, Washington, that the Avon Bypass Project and other projects related to dredging, widening or changing the natural channels and water flow of the Skagit River may well affect the salmon runs. If such occurs, then the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the members of the Swinomish Reservation will consider this as a violation and deprivation of the rights granted under the Treaty of Point Elliott of 1855.

Letter to Colonel Perry re Objections to Avon Bypass Project and related Phases Thereof by Swinomish Indian Tribal Community January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass

Let's have protection now, rather than 'Aid to a Disaster Area' later."

Zell A. Young, Welder West Mt. Vernon, January 10, 1964 public hearing on Avon Bypass

