

# MOUNT VERNON ARGUS.

December 17, 1909

## A CONFERENCE OF COMMERCIAL CLUBS

The improvement of the Skagit river is a matter of most vital and urgent public importance. Every citizen in the society is interested either directly or indirectly in the improvement of the river. While the commercial demand for the improvement of the river is generally recognized – and emphasized by the growing needs of shipping, there are other material considerations of far-reaching public interest that equal if not overshadow these. Among the lessons of the recent flood the one that was forcibly impressed on the mind of the observer, was the utter inadequacy of the river to discharge the huge volume of water during a flood. It is generally believed that the channel of the river should be straightened, widened and deepened. There are too many bends in the river. If the channel of the river was straightened here and there and the bed widened and deepened, the strong current of the river would undoubtedly assist materially in maintaining the larger channel, and would doubtless carry to the sea all accumulating sand and silt.

Would it not be advisable for all of the commercial organizations of the county to come together in an organized effort to urge on Congress the immediate need of the improvement of the Skagit? The improvement has been recommended by the United States engineers, a survey of the river was made, and the state's delegation in Congress all agreed to urge that Congress make an appropriation for the improvement. Yet we have no assurance that the improvement will be forth coming this year or next. Let these commercial bodies come

together, and, if need be, demand immediate action of congress through our delegation. Or better send a representative from this county to Washington to convince our delegation that we are dead in earnest, and want immediate action on that appropriation.

The Skagit is a navigable stream, the largest in Western Washington. Millions of dollars are appropriated annually for the improvement of rivers of infinitely less commercial value than the Skagit. Then the nation's engineers have recommended the improvement of the river, our state delegation have approved it and solemnly promised that they would secure the appropriation for us, without unnecessary delay. The recent disastrous flood, emphasizes, without further delay, the need of this improvement, so let the commercial clubs get together and bring to bear on our delegation such powerful pressure and influence that no possible excuse could be justified on their part, that they were not personally aware that the improvement is so urgently needed.

Doubtless President Moberg should take the initiative in this movement.

It might be proper to invite a delegation from Seattle. Surely Seattle is personally interested in any movement that has the purpose in view to control the Skagit and protect the county against damages from recurring floods. The trade of this county amounts to millions of dollars annually to Seattle, and to have a part of the trade destroyed by a flood is a direct loss to that city.