

THE MOUNT VERNON ARGUS

WRITES ABOUT FLOOD CONTROL

John Finstad of Conway Offers Material for Citizens' Consideration.

John Finstad of Conway has written the following article for the Argus in which he takes up the control of the Skagit river. It is well worth the consideration of every citizen of Skagit county and even of the whole Northwest.

In recent years there has been some agitation for the purpose of controlling the floodwaters of the Skagit river, but as time passes on after a disastrous flood, the people of the valley easily forget that they ever had a flood, until another comes along. Then they will have meetings for some time figuring on dredging and straightening the channel, but in the end nothing comes out of it.

However, most of the people realize something should be done, as these flood periods are just like a nightmare in the minds of the people. We know that few spots on the Globe can beat this bottom land in productiveness, but still it goes today begging at \$200 per acre and it ought to be worth three times as much. The high taxes cannot be blamed altogether for these low prices. There are other reasons and the main one is the flood danger.

Not considering the disastrous summer freshet in 1894 we have had six or seven fast winter freshets during the last 30 years. The highest one of these was the one of November 30, 1909, when about eight inches of rain fell in two days at upriver points. This flood measured about 220,000 second feet at Sedro-Woolley. Competent engineers claim that only about 150,000 second feet can pass through at the Riverside Great Northern bridge. Consequently about 70,000 second feet had to seek an outlet somewhere else.

The February flood of this year was not considered dangerous but still it destroyed half a dozen homesteads at the Sauk delta and broke dikes at the Skagit delta to the value of at least \$20,000, besides destroying several bridges at upriver points.

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We have back in the mountains numerous large basins and deep gulches and valleys. Undoubtedly places can be found where a dam can be built equaling for storage purposes at least half a cube mile. The Ruby dam of the Seattle hydroelectric project is to be 480 feet high creating a lake about 25 miles long and five miles wide in most places. Back of this dam the Skagit has a shed of about 1200 square miles or a little more than one third of the whole basin of the Skagit and its tributaries. Actual measurements at this damsite by U. S. G. S. shows the minimum flow to be 800 second feet and the maximum 50,000 second feet during 12 years of observation up to 1923. Supposing the upper 20 feet of this dam was reserved for flood control it would take care of the maximum flow of 50,000 for at least twelve days.

Stone & Webster are going to build a dam across the Baker canyon back of Concrete in the near future. Here another lake will be created up to six or seven miles long. If 20 feet was reserved for flood control at this dam, Baker river would be eliminated from any flood danger from that source.

We have then only the Sauk and its main tributary, the Suattle, where no project has been contemplated, but some day this will be taken up also.

It is predicted that the Pacific ocean will before long be the center of the main tradelanes. The Mediterranean was for thousands of years. After the Renaissance period in the fifteenth century the Atlantic became the most important ocean for traderoutes. It is but natural then because very near half of the world's population is centered around the Pacific, that this part of the Globe will be the next trade-center.

Judging by the last fifty years it would be a conservative prediction that our Pacific slope will more than treble during the next fifty years in population. We are safe here from cyclones, but floods are next in destructiveness. These floods can be eliminated. Why not make a start and get ready for the great influx of people to our valley when they know that it is safe from floods.

When the forests are gone our greatest assets will be our water-courses, not alone for hydroelectric purposes but also for irrigation.

JOHN S. FINSTAD.

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