

Raging Skagit Breaks Through Dikes

Delta Farmers Greatest Sufferers from Freshet

Although Several Breaks Occur, Only Comparatively Small Area Is Inundated—Losses of Cattle and Poultry Small—Roads Suffer Some

Unable to withstand the pressure of the mighty Skagit, swelled by rains and melting snow, dikes broke at three widely different places during the week-end, allowing flood waters to inundate more than 12,000 acres of farm land in the lower valley, resulting in considerable damage to property.

Other large areas of the valley, usually flooded during high water in previous years, were saved only by the heroic efforts of farmers who labored tirelessly for hours to hold the dikes in front of their own and neighbors' farms. In some places even the women and girls helped to fill sacks.

Although the water did not rise to the height of former floods, and the ominous roar of turbulent, rushing waters, so familiar in the past, was not heard, sections where the water had previously been held at the very top of the dike, were perilously near a break this time on account of a weakened condition of the dikes, which have been neglected somewhat because of confidence in present dams to hold back floods, it is said.

The first break occurred about eleven o'clock Saturday evening in front of Phil Iverson's farm, which is located on Skagit Island, between Fir and Skagit City. Water is still running through the channel which was made when the river carried away a section of about 400 feet of dike and swept everything in its path.

Mr. Iverson, who had been watching the dike, had just returned to his house when Miss Minnie and Miss Dorothy Gerriets, seeing the seepage under the dike, stopped their car and ran in to inform him of the impending danger.

While the two sisters drove back to Fir, warning farmers along the road and calling for help, Mr. Iverson worked frantically to stop the leak, which within ten minutes was out of control and was throwing a stream of water across the road.

Finally, seeing that the task was useless, he rushed his family away in a car just ahead of the water, which soon broke through, tearing out light and telephone poles and moving his house some twenty-five feet back against the pump house, where it is now lodged.

Mr. and Mrs. Iver Iverson, parents of Phil Iverson, remained all night in their house on

the other side of the break, as did the John Leander family, some distance back through the field. Mr. Leander stayed in the barn with his cattle. Cattle in the elder Iverson's barn were removed the next morning by the son and others, who were forced to wade waist deep ahead of the animals to persuade them to leave the flooded region.

Delta Under Water

This break, together with three others along Dry Slough, which runs across the island, completely inundated the large Skagit delta, about 5,000 acres of farm country bordered by the two forks of the river and the bay. Two of these breaks occurred early Sunday morning at the Ed Good and I. R. Hallen farms; the other the same afternoon, at Mrs. Sadie Polstra's place. Water has been running out into the bay through the salt water dikes which broke several places near John Wylie's farm and were cut elsewhere.

Alex Johnson of Fir lost between 150 and 200 chickens in one of his houses where water reached the height of three feet, ten inches higher than any previous flood during the last thirty-three years. Andrew Crogstad, also of Fir, lost four head of stock—two calves marooned in a shed and two cows, which refused to be driven through the water into the barn where the other cattle remained safe. The only other known loss of live stock on the island was eight or ten sheep out of a flock of 250 being kept on the Bruce place by William Sund, Conway butcher. Some of the sheep were trampled and others were crowded off the mow of the barn where they were crowded together.

A bridge trestle, hay stacks, and small buildings were seen floating down the river while the water was still rising. A barn with six head of cattle and two horses was washed from its foundation on a small island near the Utopia school. The large cabin on the Cass place, near the point where Dry Slough joins the North Fork, was undermined and carried away. The North Fork bridge had to be opened to let it pass.

The sluice box in Drainage District No. 22 near LaConner went out and the dike broke near the Fred Anderson farm Sunday morning, flooding 1,600 acres of land in Dodge Valley and between Sullivan Slough and Pleasant Ridge. Seed crops will be