THE COURIER-TIMES

DECEMBER 1, 1949

ROSS DAM LESSENS FLOOD DAMAGE

Seattle City Light's Ross Dam in the upper Skagit played a large part in keeping the serious flow from begin even worse, E. R. Hoffman, Lighting Superintendent, reports.

The valves in the big dam were closed Wednesday, Nov. 23, and no water from the entire upper river was allowed to pass.

From Thursday midnight until Sunday midnight enough water was held behind the dam to cover 116,000 acres of land to a depth of one foot.

At the crest of the flood approximately 42,600 cubic feet of water were impounded every second. Elevation of Ross Lake, nearly 20 miles long, came up ten feet, and is now forty feet higher than anticipated for this time of year.

On November 28 there was still enough storage space to impound another 200,000 acre feet of water behind Ross Dam. The valves were still closed and no water was getting past the dam.

As the rain had stormed and temperatures were somewhat lower no difficulty was anticipated in stopping the upper river flow as long as necessary.

The flood crest at Concrete, a large town below Ross Dam crested at 149,000 cubic feet per second on Sunday, Nov. 27. This would have been disastrously worse except for the water held behind Ross Dam.

The crest passed Mt. Vernon early Monday morning, Nov. 28 and the entire river was reported to be receding.

"Ross Dam does a great deal to keep floods on the Skagit from being much worse." Hoffman said. "However, it cannot be expected that a dam so far up the river will prevent floods altogether.

"Only about one-fourth of the river lies above Ross Dam, and the tributary streams feeding the upper fourth are a good deal smaller than the streams below the dam."

The flood was caused by heavy rains and unseasonable warm temperatures that melted snow already in the mountains. From Tuesday through Sunday approximately 11 inches of rain fell on the upper Skagit.

About 4 inches of rain fell in 24 hours on Saturday and one and one-half inches on Sunday. Maximum temperatures were from 45 to 58 degrees, melting an undetermined amount of snow.