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LOW WATER DELAYS STARTING OF NEW POWER PLANT HERE

BAKER RIVER PLANT MAY NOT START FOR A MONTH YET-OPENING DATE DEPENDS ON WEATHER CONDITIONS

Last week, with rain every day and a small freshet in the Baker River, it seemed certain that Lake Shannon, the big lake formed by the filling of the dam across the Baker River, would be filled within another week or ten days. However, the rain stopped in a few days and the weather turned cold, and the river quickly dropped to the extreme low level of a few weeks ago. As a consequence the lake is filling very slowly, and unless another heavy rain comes to give relief, it appears as if it will be another month or six weeks before there will be water enough to start the turbines turning in the power plant.

The lake has now reached a height where every inch of raise is spread over hundreds of acres in area, and as it rises from now every foot of raise will mean a greater area to cover and therefore the raise will be slower. For the 24 hours ending yesterday evening the lake rose just 12 inches. The water at that time was 31 feet below the tunnel and the water level must be 10 feet above the intake before the plant can be started. This means that the water still has 41 feet to rise before operations can be started. At the rate of a foot or less a day, the present rate of progress, it will bring the starting time quite close to Christmas. The Puget Sound Power & Light company has promised Baker River power as a Christmas present to its customers in the lower valley and it now seems that there is little danger that the present will be

delivered ahead of time.

The machinists and operators are just marking time while the lake is rising. They are putting the finishing touches on some of the machinery and finding odd jobs to do, but they are all anxious to know how the wonderful machines are going to work when the water is turned on--whether it will run smoothly from the start, or if several weeks will have to be spent in making delicate adjustments.

On other parts of the works the work is being rapidly finished for the winter. Several hundred men have been laid off during the past week and more are leaving daily as the jobs are completed. There is considerable work to be done yet, but most of this will be postponed until next summer.