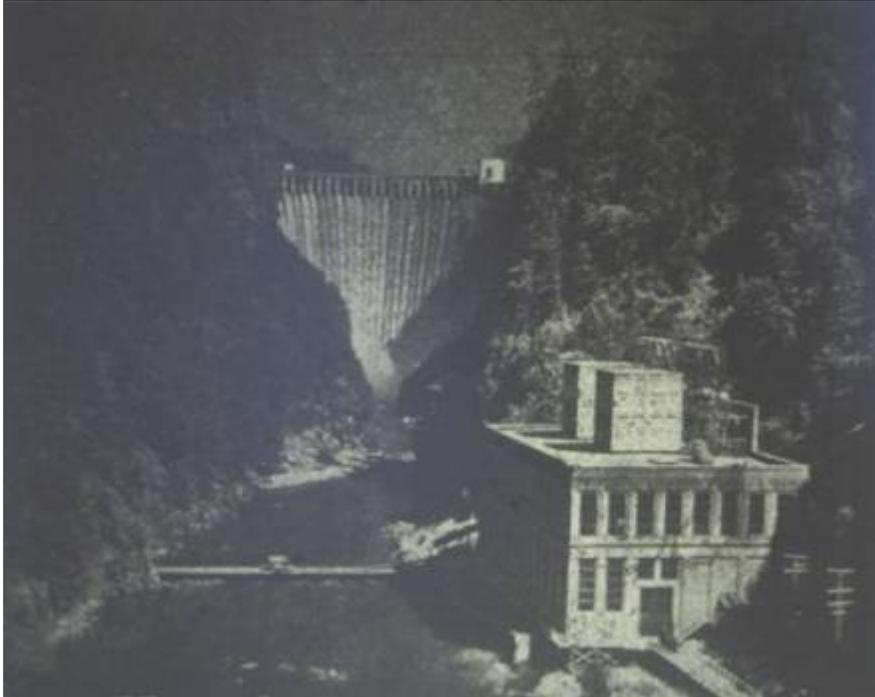


THE CONCRETE HERALD

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POWER SHORTAGE HITS BAKER DAM

**LAKE SHANNON DOWN, RIVER FLOW AT LOWEST POINT IN YEARS
- CEMENT PLANT OPERATIONS CURTAILED AS BEAR CREEK PLANT
DROPS OUTPUT - COUNTY TO CUT USE OF ELECTRICITY TO AID IN
LONG SHORTAGE**

The growing power shortage caused by the unprecedented lack of rainfall this year, began to hurt on the local level this week and is threatening even more serious conditions for the balance of the winter. The shortage is no longer just theory – it is here. First to feel the shortage was the plant of Superior Portland Cement, Inc. here. They have had to cut down operations to a minimum. Other industries and even small users are asked to aid in further cuts in order to make the water behind the dams last as long as possible.

At the Baker River power station, the

plant is operating at just 12 ½ percent of normal for this time of year. Actually all the water that is being used is a small stream to keep the fish run in progress. The lake is now at 421.30 ft. – about 15 feet below normal. As a method of comparison the river normally runs 30,000 second feet. At present the flow is but 432 second feet!

Water in the Skagit is also so low that the ferries have trouble operating. The Pressentin ferry at Birdsvie has been closed down.

The cement company was caught in a

bad position due to the fact that their Bear Creek power plant is also suffering from a shortage of water and now is operating at just half of normal output. Cut-backs by the power pool reduced their allotment to about 90 per cent of the power purchased last year at this time. Last year the Bear Creek power source was in flood so they were not purchasing much power.

As a result it has been necessary to curtail operations by shutting down sections of the plant. Luckily a program of repair is now in process so no employees have been laid off. If the shortage continues, however, a loss of employment will be felt here.

Townpeople Must Help

To prevent further unnecessary cut-backs, the residents of the upper valley are asked to voluntarily make every effort to save power. As Supt. Andy Miller of the local power house points out, a 60-watt lamp turned off by every user of power in the valley would mean a sizeable saving in storage water behind the Baker River dam.

In the lower valley merchants are instituting a contribution of their own by turning off window display lighting and outdoor signs. Sedro-Woolley, Anacortes, Mount Vernon and Burlington are leading the cut-back program. All smaller towns are expected to follow suit.

Shortage Not Temporary

One thing that must be considered is that the shortage is not just temporary. Unless heavy rains begin to fall and continue for a long period, the lakes and streams will continue to drop. The cold weather is no help as snow will merely pile up in the hills to be used next spring. A chinook wind is all that could bring it down.

Normally this is flood season with lots of water. Today it appears that it will take

very unusual weather conditions to relieve the power shortage before spring.