

Flood Cost, Effect Of New Law, Hit County Taxpayers

Last spring's flood and the effect of a new state law will hit the taxpayers' pocketbooks in Skagit county next year.

Cost of rebuilding and strengthening the dikes along the Skagit accounts for a boost in the levy for most of the districts affected by the flood as well as some of the others. The new state law, providing for levying dike taxes on the basis of improvements as well as acreage, has sent the valuation of the districts soaring, particularly those which include city property.

Double Revenue

Combining the two factors, taxation for the coming year is expected to bring in over double the amount collected the past year for diking purposes. The total for the 16 districts in the county was \$56,843.54 in 1951 and is figured at 118,080.71 for 1952, according to statistics released today by the office of County Assessor Ray Ropes.

The increase in diking district taxes helps account for the \$1,749,549 grand total tax to be paid by county taxpayers in 1952, compared with \$1,579,776 the past year. There is, however, a general increase all along the line in taxes to be collected, accounted for partly by a higher levy and partly by a substantial increase in the valuation of county property, which is figured at 11 per cent above the past year's total.

Inventories Up

Larger inventories of logs and merchandise account for much of the gain in valuation, according to Mr. Ropes.

All the diking districts but one affected by the flood have higher levies in the coming year. Diking district 15, on Fir island, has doubled its rate from 100 to 200 mills. Diking district 20, paying for past improvements, keeps its rate at 170 mills.

The two districts which include parts of Mount Vernon, No. 1, on the west side of the river, and 3, on the east, show the biggest jump in valuation. District 1 has a valuation of \$1,081,545, as compared with \$347,855 before the new law went into effect. District 3 has upped its valuation from \$401,636, when only acreage value was counted, to \$2,138,350, representing improvements as well as land.

Reduce Mill Rate

Thanks to the big boost in valuation, district 3 was able to reduce its mill rate from 37 to 7, to produce approximately the same amount of revenue. District 1 increased its rate from 15 to 20 and its revenue from \$5,218 to \$21,630.

District 17, which includes Riverside, has raised its levy from 23 to 30, its valuation from \$94,710 to \$337,226. District 12, which adjoins Burlington, had no levy last year, 30 mills for the coming year. Its valuation is figured as the same.

Fir Island Rates Up

The Fir island districts, 2, 13, 18, 15 and 21, have all but one increased their levies. Number 2, up from 60 to 100 mills, shows little increase in valuation. Number 13 is up from 35 to 60 mills with the same valuation; district 15, doubling its 100 mill levy, also has its valuation unchanged and 18, valuation unchanged, has kept its levy at 5 mills. Little district 21 has raised its rate from 15 to 20 mills.

(Continued on Page Eight)

Flood Cost

(Continued from Page One)

Dike district taxes are expected to bring in \$118,080 this coming year, as compared with \$56,843 in the past year. Rates are up in 11 of the 16 districts, with district 15 paying 200 mills, district 20, 170 mills and four others 100 mills or more.

Valuation of districts one and three, which include part of Mount Vernon under the new state law, have soared from 347,855 to \$1,081,545.

Mount Vernon Lowest

Mount Vernon again has the lowest total tax rate in the county, in spite of a two mill increase over last year, for schools. The city taxpayers will pay on the basis of a 45.95 mill rate. Sedro-Woolley has 46.95, down from 59.90 the current year. Lyman and Hamilton have the same total tax as Sedro-Woolley.

Concrete's total property tax load is 47.95 mills, up from 45.90 and Burlington's is 50.95, increased from 48.90. LaConner's total tax rate is 51.95, as compared with 49.90 the past year.

Anacortes on Top

Anacortes leads the county in total property tax load, with its port district helping to account for the increase and its school taxes more than doubled. The total is 71.98 mills, compared with 53.40 mills the past year, when it ranked behind Sedro-Woolley, Lyman and Hamilton. The cut in the school levy from 30 50 17 in the latter three towns accounts for their big drop in total taxes.

Breaking down the county taxpayer's dollar, about 33 cents goes for the county schools and another 4 per cent for satellite institutions of higher learning. Nineteen cents goes to the county, 13 cents to the cities and towns, 12 cents to the road districts, seven to the diking districts, five to pay on the county bridge bonds and approximately three cents to the fire districts. The rest is divided among minor funds.

Five of the county's eight cities showed a total tax increase (including state, county, school, road and special taxes). School taxes accounted for a large part of the increase.

State taxes will take \$79,982 out of the county in the coming year, as compared with \$72,443 in current year. County taxes will cost \$325,240.85, as compared with \$300,163.42 this year. The

county bridge fund, a special levy, will also take a larger bite out of the taxpayer's pocketbook, to the tune of \$81,309, up from \$75,040.

The county's increased tax take is due solely to the increased valuation, with the mill rate the same. The state's tax rate, used for the institutions of higher learning, with the university taking about half, is increased only a fraction of a mill.

The towns of the county are sticking close to the millage rate of last year, with Anacortes actually reducing the rate. However, the increased valuation more than makes up for this.