

In Skagit Dredging

Chamber Requests River Industry Aid

A series of letters soliciting aid in getting the Skagit River improved for better water transportation were mailed today by the Chamber of Commerce to various industries along the river.

The letters were written as a result of the Chamber Board meeting yesterday in the President Hotel. The chamber again took up its drive to have the silt-plugged north mouth of the river cleaned out.

The Skagit River, once the main transportation artery for Mount Vernon and the Skagit Valley, has had a steady decline

in river traffic. The board has indicated that it feels the city and county are losing money by not using the waterway to its fullest capacity.

Two commercial rivermen were at the meeting yesterday. Harry Grimison of the Skagit River Navigation and Trading Company, founded in 1890, said his two stern wheelers have not been able to navigate the silt filled north fork of the river for the past ten days.

Jim Dunlap, speaking for the Dunlap Towing company in La-Conner, said the firm towed \$2 million worth of timber down the river last year from upper Skagit County.

"We brought down 32 million board feet of timber which otherwise would have been carried on the highways and there is more to come," he said.

Both men said they could only use the river at high tides to get over the delta land at the mouth of the river.

Chamber President Ted Reep asked Grimison to contact the district Corps of Engineers to set up another meeting with them and community leaders to discuss possible improvement of the situation. An unsuccessful meeting was held in 1949 at which time the Engineers said the project was not economically justified.

A letter was read from Harvey Davis, the new manager for the chamber, now in the Navy in Washington, D. C. Davis said he had talked with Congressman Jack Westland about the project. Westland said he was interested in it, but the community must show support if dredging and other work is to be done.

Westland promised the chamber earlier this month that he would come to Mount Vernon for a meeting about the river after Congress adjourns.