

Seeks Appropriation

Westland Backing \$20,000 Survey

Second District Congressman Jack Westland pledged his support yesterday in seeking a \$20,000 appropriation in Congress to finance a survey of the Skagit River by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Westland gave this promise to an audience of businessmen and community leaders at the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce meeting in the President Hotel. They gathered to hear what Westland and Col. Norman A. Matthias, district engineer, U.S. Army, had to say about cleaning out the silt-filled mouth of the Skagit River to aid navigation and commerce.

Col. Matthias said his office would do the work, but the community must get the money for the project. He estimated it would cost \$20,000 to perform the survey necessary for drawing up a work plan of dredging and jetties.

"Why, we don't even talk about \$20,000 in Congress," Westland quipped while the audience laughed.

He hastened to add that sometimes it is harder to raise a few thousand than to get billions.

No Promises

"I have never promised that I would do this or that thing in Congress for anybody. I can only say I'll do my best to keep the ball rolling on this project and get the money for you," Westland concluded.

Westland, Matthias and George Kurttila, a civilian engineer with the Corps of Engineers, all said that the community must supply the data to prove that the project would save more eventually than it would cost.

Leo Beckley, chairman of the chamber's river committee, conducted a roundtable discussion among the 30 or more present at the meeting. Representatives of Darigold and Carnation companies said they have had to either give up or cut down drastically on their shipments by river because of the irregular schedule of the boats.

Harry Grimison of the Skagit River Navigation Company said his boats could cross the sand bar at the mouth of the river only at high tides, which makes a regular schedule impossible. He noted that the engineers had opened a channel on the north course from Bald Island to Smuggler's Cove this summer, but said it could not be used when certain types of winds are blowing.

Gene Hopkins, representing a sportsmen's club, said his group thought the silt-filled mouth might be hindering the spawning runs of salmon.

Several businessmen pointed out that river transportation helps to keep freight rates low by competition.

Chamber President Ted Reep told the engineers and Westland that the chamber would keep working on the project and supply the information needed by the Army.



RIVER PLANNERS—Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce president Ted Reep, center, talked to two men yesterday who will have a lot to say about future improvements to the Skagit River. On his right is Col. Norman A. Matthias, district engineer, Seattle District, and on his left is Congressman Jack Westland. The three spoke at a noon meeting of the Board of Directors meeting yesterday. Westland said he would attempt to get \$20,000 from the federal government to finance a survey of the rapidly silting river mouth.