

MOUNT VERNON ARGUS.

December 3, 1909

THE FLOOD.

Undoubtedly there are instances of actual suffering on the flats; cases where fuel has been carried away by the flood; one story homes where the occupants were caught by the water before they could escape; in these homes there may be need of food, fuel or medicine; to relieve such temporary distress is the purpose of the relief expeditions.

The recent flood in magnitude and widespread destruction wrought is undoubtedly incomparably the most calamitous known since the advent of the earliest settlement of the whites in Skagit County. Universal sympathy goes out to the people of the flood stricken district. Nothing could have withstood the huge mountains of water that came rolling down the stupendous storage batteries of the snow covered foot-hills of the Cascades. No dikes or restraining walls yet conceived by man would have been sufficient to confine that tremendous volume of water that like a huge overwhelming tidal wave rose and swept down from the mountains, spreading over the entire valley of the Skagit, and leaving widespread destruction in its path. It was an unusual storm and extraordinary conditions that caused so unnatural a storm. There is a storage basin of congealed water in the Cascades equal almost in capacity and quantity to that of an inland sea. Melt that vast body of congealed water and pour all of it at once down through the water ways into the valleys below and that mighty body of water would sweep every thing before it. As a comparison, for sixty four hours a Chinook wind melted the snow in the foothills. As a result huge volumes of water rushed down

into the valley and overflowed the river bank and spread over the entire country seeking an outlet. Naturally the smaller dikes were carried away first. It was, indeed, fortunate for the districts that maintained the larger dikes that the Chinook subsided when it did, as the condition at the time portended an overwhelming disaster. When the wind shifted, the river was still rising, notwithstanding there ten breaks in the dike on the west side, a break at the south end and the break at Sterling bend. Had the Chinook prevailed a few hours longer the big dike on the east side could not have controlled the river. However, Mt. Vernon is indebted for its escape from a disastrous flood to the foresighted wisdom and prudence of its people who expended a substantial sum of money in 1907, to build a broader and deeper and more efficient system of dikes on the east side to protect the business district of the city.

Yet the sympathy of everybody goes out to all who were sufferers from the flood. The splendid examples of self-sacrifice, individual solicitude, open-handed hospitality for those who might be in need during the flood, again proclaimed that all the world is kin.

Burlington went wet.