

NOVEMBER 5, 1936

CHAMBER HEARS DISCUSSION ON FLOOD CONTROL

Army Engineers Present
Proposed Plans For
Consideration

PARKING LOTS BOOSTED

Twelve Men Are Nominated To
Fill Six Vacancies
On Board

The proposed \$4,982,000 flood control channel from Avon to Paddilla Bay was recommended as the most feasible procedure to eliminate flood danger in the lower Skagit valley to members of the Mount Vernon chamber of commerce at its November meeting which was held in the President hotel this noon.

Recommendations were made by Major H. J. M. Baker and E. I. Pease, members of the U. S. Army Engineers corps, operating out of Seattle. Col. H. J. Wilde, in charge of the engineer activities in this district and who was scheduled to speak today, was unable to attend. Col. Wilde was taken to a Fort Lewis hospital for an emergency operation yesterday.

Consideration of a proper procedure to effect an efficient, economical system of flood control formed the major subject of discussion at the meeting today. The meeting, well attended by local businessmen, farmers, and Grangers, was very informal with discussions being prompted and

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carried on by members as well as by the speakers.

R. V. Welts Presides

President Hibbard turned the meeting over to R. V. Welts, president of the Skagit county planning council who summarized the flood control situation before introducing Major Baker.

Congress adopted a rather comprehensive flood control policy last June, Maj. Baker told the group. The policy is based on cooperation with the states in three major factors; namely,

1. Land must be provided.
2. Maintenance and operation after the project is completed must be assured.
3. The U. S. government must be kept free from any damages which might arise during the construction operations.

Many Angles

"The Skagit river has been studied from many different angles," Maj. Baker stated, and after naming several stated that the most effective means visualized was by the diversion of the channel at Avon.

"The estimated cost of this project is \$4,982,000 of which the local sponsor would have to allocate \$1,832,000. Investigations show that the benefits to be derived will equal the gross total and be a decided advantage from the standpoint of the sponsor's contribution."

When questioned as to how he had arrived at the cost of the benefits, Maj. Baker stated that damages from all the past floods had been totaled and the average annual loss computed with the construction costs.

The proposed channel is to start at Avon but preliminary work would have to start east of the Great Northern railroad bridge. The proposed channel is to be 1,500 feet wide at the bottom. It will be used strictly as a flood control measure and will not carry water except during flood conditions.

Dams Will Aid

Maj. Baker reviewed the history of floods on the Skagit during the past 26 years for which records have been kept. The highest flow of water at Sedro-Woolley during that time has been 220,000 feet per second. The present river below Mount Vernon can accommodate a flow of about 120,000 feet per second. The proposed channel is to carry any in excess of 100,000 feet per second, Baker stated. The channel's capacity is 120,000 feet per second. We have had larger floods, the speaker stated. In 1815 it is known that a flood with 450,000 cubic feet per second was seen. In 1856 there was a flow of 350,000.

The building of power dams on the Ruby, at Diablo, on the Baker and Cascade rivers will all tend to help the flood control situation and although the channel in itself is not capable of handling flood waters to such extremes as has been mentioned, with the aid of these other factors, it should be adequate.

Many Questions

Many questions and suggestions were raised by the people present. Suggestions by Wm. Hayton, Albert Mosier and Gene Dunlap that rip-rapping the cut banks of the river from Mount Vernon to the Sauk and dredging the mouth of the river were heard. The guest speaker stated that such was a good policy but that its cost would far exceed that of the channel proposal. He estimated the costs of such a system at eleven million.

Dredging at the mouth of the river met opposition from the speaker. Dredging will have no effect on high tides, he stated. And high tides are always higher during flood periods. It is the high tide that will tend to hold your river up, he added.

Preliminary to the flood control discussion a short business meeting was held by the chamber of commerce. John Dennett reported that the street department will start next week grading, leveling and marking off vacant lots to be used as parking lots in