

## Flood By-Pass Route Revised

### -- Project Given State Commissioners' Backing

Skagit county officials returned from Olympia this week with another statewide organization's endorsement of the proposed Skagit river by-pass project for flood control and support for wanted legislation.

The Washington Association of County Commissioners and Engineers, meeting in Olympia last week, passed a resolution requested by the Washington State Flood Control association asking the legislature and the state highway department to cooperate in the by-pass project. Skagit county was represented by County Commissioners Scott Richards, Joy Busha and Claude Wilson, Lloyd Johnson, acting county engineer, and William Genter, assistant county engineer. Richards is secretary of the commissioners' association, and Johnson is president of the state flood control group.

The legislature is to be asked in a forthcoming bill to direct all state agencies to cooperate with Skagit county in its flood control program. An important part of such cooperation would be the highway department's assumption for constructing three

state highway bridges across the by-pass, a channel that would run from the river above the Great Northern bridge northeast of Mount Vernon to Bay View hill and around the south side of the hill to empty into Padilla Bay in the vicinity of Indian slough.

Engineer Johnson emerged from a conference with Corps of Engineers representatives at which it was announced that numerous requests from the Whitney area for relocation of the by-pass route in that district would be effected. The new route will follow the line between Drainage Dist. No. 19 and Dike and Drainage Dists. No. 8. The diking and drainage commissioners had been concerned lest the by-pass disrupt their drainage systems.

The U. S. Engineers in addition said they would put in needed structures for internal drainage in the Whitney area. Tentative plans could not only take care of present drainage facilities but also possibly drain additional land, Johnson said.

Backers of the Skagit river flood survey and plans for some

major flood protection system such as the by-pass were encouraged by the Jan. 17 report, relayed by Rep. Jack Westland, that the U. S. Engineers had raised their original allocation request from \$135,000 to \$275,000. The feeling in the congressman's office was that this meant the Corps of Engineers was now committed to a complete study of the river and steps toward solving its flood threat.

Unlike the Avon by-pass proposed by the U. S. Engineers more than 20 years ago, the route mapped today would take much less highly valuable farm land. Needed right of way would in most cases be 500 feet wide, or less, as against a 1600-foot right of way in the original plan.

Of the \$18 million total estimated cost of the by-pass project, the county would be expected to pay for right of way and county road bridges. It is hoped the state would assume cost of state highway bridges and expected that the Corps of Engineers would obtain federal appropriations for by-pass construction and railroad bridges.