

2-13-69

## Fire Chiefs Urge Flood Preparations

Six Skagit county fire chiefs called on the county engineer's office and Joe Cain, county civil defense director, Tuesday night for immediate planning to cope with a possible flood emergency this season.

Results of the meeting were that beginning agreements were reached as to responsibilities in fields of communications, flood fighting control centers, traffic control, and handling of sand bags and food.

The group is to meet again soon after County Engr. Lloyd Johnson, the county flood coordinator, has conferred with the diking districts' flood control organization.

Johnson said there was some cause for concern because the latest snow pack report lists the Skagit watershed as 127 per cent above normal. He pointed out that while record floods have tended to come in November or December, the last serious flood in this valley occurred in February, 1951.

Magnus Anderson, commissioner of Diking Dist. No. 3 (Conway area), expressed the belief that "our dikes are 50 per cent better than in 1951."

Johnson, however, said he thought "there's some over-confidence in some areas" and declared he was "real concerned about Mount Vernon."

Chief Gene Olson of Conway fire department, chiefs' spokesman at the meeting, said the rural fire departments and Burlington were willing as in the past to have their stations used as dispatch centers for flood fighting operations. But the departments want to make certain that their primary responsibility, fire fighting, is not weakened by drains on the manpower.

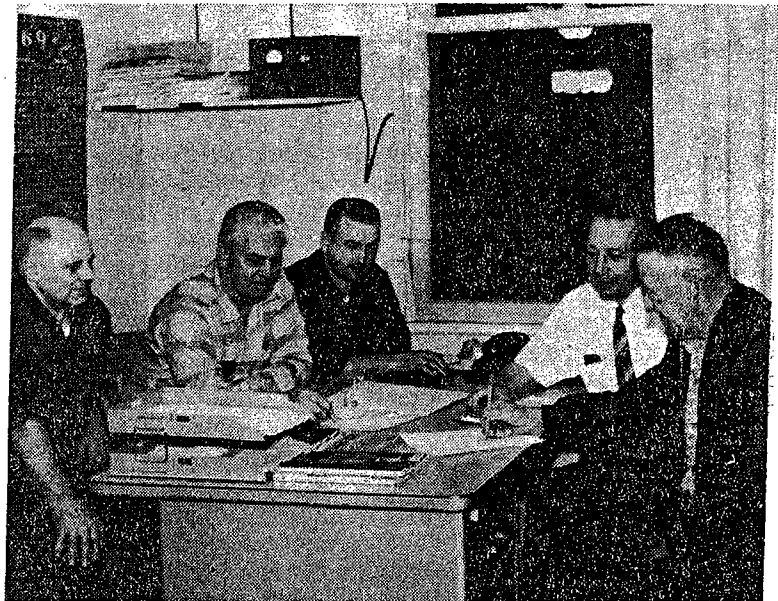
The problem of communications, between the courthouse and the fire stations and to workers on the dikes appears in better shape than in 1951, discussion indicated. Some diking districts have acquired radio equipment, the county has its own radios, and the civil defense office has a variety of such services it can call on in event of a flood. The Burlington fire department has charge of radios for one diking district and checks them out each week to be sure they are in working order, Chief Ted Banta told the group.

The Sedro Woolley fire department, not ordinarily as directly involved in flood work as departments lower in the val-

ley, has taken on the responsibility of compiling a list of boats available for rescue work, the firemen said.

Engr. Johnson said that in addition to calling the diking district group together he expected soon to have the U. S. Corps of Engineers hold a "flood drill" here to make certain plans were up to date.

Others attending Tuesday night's meeting, in Johnson's office, included Fire Chief Fred Hart of Cedardale, Chief Pete Walker of McLean Road fire department, Fire Capt. Paul Koetje of Conway; Ralph Rothrock, deputy flood coordinator, and John Ensley, construction engineer, in the county engineering department.



PLANNING FOR FLOOD—Others at flood planning session here Tuesday night were (from left) Chief Fred Hart, Cedardale; and Chief Gene Olson, Conway, fire departments; Fire Capt. Paul Koetje, Conway; County Engr. Lloyd Johnson and Magnus Johnson, Diking Dist. No. 3 commissioner.—Argus photo, Scanagrawing

# THE MOUNT VERNON ARGUS

MOUNT VERNON, SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 13, 1969



**FLOOD RADIO DEMONSTRATED**—Burlington's fire chief, Ted Banta, demonstrated a diking district's radio walkie-talkie at flood preparation meeting at courthouse here Tuesday night. With him were (on left) Chief Pete Walker, McLean

Road fire department, and (to right) Ralph Rothrock, county deputy flood coordinator; Joe Cain, civil defense director, and John Ensley, county road construction engineer.

—Argus photo, Scanagraving.