

# THE COURIER-TIMES

APRIL 4, 1946

## Effort Made To Lessen Flood Threat

### Control of Dam Overflow Asked by County Officials

In an effort to lessen the possibility of a major flood in Skagit county due to the record amount of snowfall now in the Cascades, the board of county commissioners and the Skagit County Planning council this week contacted by letter, heads of both the Seattle City Light and the Puget Sound Power and Light companies in a request that these concerns co-operate in regulating the flow of excess water over their respective dams on the Skagit and Baker rivers, and making more storage space available during the peak flow.

Following is a copy of the letter written to Gene Hoffman, superintendent of City Light, and Frank McLaughlin, president of Puget Sound Power and Light, and signed by W. A. McLean, chairman of the planning council and James T. Ovenell, chairman of the board of commissioners:

Gentlemen:

The board of county commissioners and the Skagit County Planning council have requested that this letter be written in an effort to gain your help in solving a flood control problem.

As you well know, we have had unprecedented snowfall during the past winter and the people in the Skagit valley are extremely alarmed over the danger of spring or early summer floods. Their fears are justified because of past history when such abundant snowfall is present.

We wonder if, through the co-operation of City Light and Puget Sound Power and Light it might be possible to avert potential disaster.

It is our understanding that the existing dams on the Skagit, if proper regulation of water flow be had, can serve as an important agency toward preventing a flood. We understand also that as a prerequisite to the grant of the right to place dams, the federal commission requires that the upper reaches of such dams be made to assist in flood control.

We understand also that as a prerequisite to the grant of the right to place dams, the federal commission requires that the upper reaches of such dams be made to assist in flood control.

We realize that these upper reaches have not yet been built but it seems to us that the basic proposition is sound, namely, that through the proper control in releasing excess water, sufficient storage space can be retained to take up the peak flow of water for the few days during which the lower valley is endangered.

Those of us who have lived here all our lives know that the diking assistance can handle all but the last few feet of water. We also know many days ahead of time when that peak flow is going to come. We realize that the problem of City Light and Puget Sound Power and Light is to be sure that they have abundant water at all times. With the present snowfall there can be no doubt that sufficient water will be available. The difficulty is there will probably be far too much water.

Would it not be possible, through full co-operation and intelligent regulation, for the storage levels to be maintained near the minimum requirement until the excess of melting snow comes through warm winds or warm weather, and when that does start so regulate the flow as to allow escape during its maximum periods. We appreciate the fact that the water that comes through the Skagit, as far up as the City Dam, is only 35% of the entire flow that reaches the lower valley. We do feel, however, that there is sufficient margin of regulation to control the quantity of water that will prove dangerous at the peak flood time.

We are submitting this thought to you, gentlemen, not only as superintendent of City Light and president of Puget Sound Power and Light, respectively, but as extremely capable engineers. We can not believe that a solution is impossible. This danger is acute; this large amount of snowfall is bound to come off during the next 90 days. If sufficient storage can be made available, it does seem that disaster might be averted. We ask you for your help and co-operation.