

Need For Flood Control

Federal And State Aid At Stake In Election Planning Council Says

A statement pointing out the need for organizing a flood control district in Skagit county, upon which the eligible voters residing east of Swinomish channel will make a decision December 3, was issued today by the Skagit county planning council. Members of the council are: R. V. Welts, chairman; Grant Sisson, secretary; J. H. Hulbert, Harold McFarlane, Peter Lee, James T. Ovenell, W. R. Morgan, Carol Bridger, J. H. Smith, State Senator W. J. Knutzen, A. G. Mosler, Ed Schwartz, Clyde F. Shrauger.

The planning council points out in its statement that the county has been unable to solve the flood problem for more than fifty years, and that with the organization of a district, Skagit county will be in a position to receive assistance from the state and federal governments, without which a permanent solution cannot be arrived at.

Full text of the council's statement follows:

The Planning Council believes the formation of our flood control district is the most important thing this county has attempted to do. The Skagit and Samish rivers have always presented a serious problem. Through the years, instead of growing better, the dangers have constantly increased. Something must be done or the entire valley faces disaster. In the past we have tried to work single-handed. This has failed.

Can't Succeed Alone

The land in this valley has been reclaimed from overflow by rivers and salt water at tremendous cost. Fifty years ago the individual tried to dike and drain his land. In a few years he learned that he could not succeed alone. His neighbors joined with him and formed dike and drainage districts designed to protect and reclaim small isolated units. Neighboring farmers formed similar districts; each trying to protect its property, regardless of what happened to the adjoining district. We now have 27 independent diking and drainage units. Through the years they have spent over \$1,000,000 of the taxpayers' money for protection.

The fertility of the land in this valley is without comparison. We have, as we know, one of the most highly developed communities in the Northwest. It has been built up through the expenditure of millions upon millions of dollars. We have recently realized, through the flood of two years ago, when over 20,000 acres were under salt water, and through the fact that each winter we now have floods from the Skagit and Samish rivers, that we must have help.

Cities Are Menaced

As we have been building our dikes, the timber has been logged from our hills. They are now bare. They no longer hold back the rainfall and melting snow. This water comes into the rivers more rapidly than before. At Hamilton, Lyman, Sterling and a hundred other places on both the Skagit and Samish the rivers are each year washing away acres upon acres of land. This silt has filled up the mouths of the rivers and the river beds. The dikes cannot hold back the flood waters. Each year this condition is growing worse. The entire farming area and the existence of towns such as Mount Vernon, Burlington, Lyman, Hamilton is jeopardized. At Sterling the Skagit has so changed its course and is so rapidly cutting away the river bank that it will soon force a new channel north of Burlington through the farming country to salt water. If you do not believe it, go and look. Something must be done and it must be done at once or the whole valley will face disaster. What can we do?

A half century of experience has