

Mopping-up Operations Follow After Skagway Flood

JUNEAU—Gov. Walter J. Hickel's office reported last weekend that the flood danger in Skagway appears to be easing, and mopping-up operations have started in the Southeastern Alaska community under generally clear skies.

Mel J. Personett, Alaska's Commissioner of Public Safety, was on the scene in Skagway through the night as the Governor's representative. He joined with Skagway Mayor Edward C. Hanousek in supervising efforts to maintain and reinforce dikes protecting the town from the rampaging Skagway River.

Hickel singled out Hanousek, and also Guy Self, Skagway's Civil Defense director, for particular praise for their skillful and quick efforts to organize the town's flood-fighting efforts.

Col. Ernest Hardin from the Army Corps of Engineers,

supervisor of the Corps' current flood recovery efforts in Fairbanks, and Nenana, was slated to arrive in Skagway last Saturday. He was to make an on-the-scene inspection to determine measures the Corps could take to head off further flooding.

Conditions in Skagway reached their critical point during the night. Flood fighters were braced for further onslaughts of flood water because they feared that a high tide at the coastal community of 650 residents might force the waters of the Skagway River to back up and inundate the town.

Personett reported during the night that the river registered some rise when the tide came in, but the dikes held and were not breached.

Patrols checked and reinforced the dikes through the night, adding fill material to weak spots. Heavy earth-moving equipment rushed to Skagway on Friday aboard the ferry Taku was used to help move the fill.

Hickel ordered the Taku held in Skagway until after midnight when the critical tide began to turn, and it was apparent that the vessel would not be needed to provide food and shelter for flood refugees.

Hickel also reported that the Haines Cutoff road received extensive damage from the excessive rains that last Friday in the general Skagway-Haines area.

The road is the only highway link between Haines, Alaska, the northern terminus of the state ferry system, and Haines Junction, Y.T., where the cutoff ties in to the Alaska Highway.

Hickel flew over the cutoff last Friday in a Coast Guard helicopter while he was en route to Skagway to check on flood conditions.

The Governor said the road was still under water in several spots, and "There were numerous mud and rock slides across the road—some 200 feet wide, others up to a half-mile wide."

One bridge approach, at Mile 48-1/2, was also washed out.

Highway Department engineers said it would take several days to clear the road, and they could not pinpoint when it will be reopened until they are able to make a ground inspection all along the 150-mile route.

As the Governor reported on the flood situation in Skagway, he also had a succinct comment which summed up the entire flood situation across the state, including the disastrous floods in Fairbanks and Nenana just last month.

As the Governor toured the downtown Skagway area last Friday afternoon, he told a crowd on the street: "Either the federal government is going to have to liberalize its loan policies, or the Lord's going to have to turn off the rain—and I've talked to both."

The number of veterans in civil life increased by 271,000 during the past year to a total of 25,846,000, the Veterans Administration reports.

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Flood Control Hearing Postponed Till Oct. 17

Corps of Engineers, Alaska District, issued a resolution last week to postpone hearing on flood control improvements on the Tanana River basin.

The hearing was to be conducted last Tuesday at the Lathrop High School in Fairbanks. The new date has been set for October 17 at the Lathrop Auditorium.

The postponement was ordered so that the report may fully cover the flood control matter. The later date was decided upon after consultation with North Star Borough and Fairbanks city officials.

All interested parties are invited to be present or represented at the hearing which will take place at 8:00 p.m.

There will be representatives from federal, state and municipal agencies, and commercial, industrial, civic, highway, flood or erosion control interests, and property owners concerned.

They will be afforded full opportunity to express their views concerning the character and extent of the improvement proposed and the need and advisability of its execution.

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