Divergence of Opinion Brought to Light at Hearing on Basin Drainage

By EVA HAMILTON
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

The approach to a drainage problem in Jackson county, even as the approach to any problem in democratic America, brings to light a divergence of opinions.

This became obvious early Thursday afternoon when a hearing on drainage problems in the Bear creek basin got under way at the courthouse.

While one man wants all the channels on his property cleared of berry vines, willows and debris, another wants these masses of thorns and sticks to stay where they are as feeding grounds for song birds and blinds for duck hunters.

One man sees only the torrents of flood water threatening his home or business. His country neighbor sees erosion stealing away the soil he wants to farm.

Jack Hoffbuhr, manager of the Medford Irrigation district, spoke for clearing the channels. He maintained that the major trouble in the Dec. 2 flood resulted from jammed channels.

He criticized contractors for building too close to streams, explaining that it is impossible to remove debris and silt when there is so little clearance around the banks. He asked that city and county planning commissions take a serious look at all subdivision plots to make sure that sufficient space is left for maintenance of the creek channels.

"Who has the authority to require private owners to maintain channels through their property?" Hoffbuhr asked.

He urged the county to require an annual maintenance program on channels such as the irrigation districts carry on with their canals. He recommended a county wide levy to provide for this annual program, stating that $150,000 a year would clean up most of the creeks that are causing trouble now.

He admitted that the irrigation districts use streams as laterals in summer. He said the districts are not permitted to use funds for drainage except to protect structures

Agree With Spokesman

Larry Silveira, manager of the Eagle Point district; Walter Hoffbuhr, Talent; Harold Sexton, Rogue River Valley, agreed with the Medford district spokesman that there is need for a county levy.

The state highway department, represented by Will Chandler, listed damage from the Dec. 2 flood at $160,000.

Judson Dakin of the Southern Pacific railroad, Portland office, said his company experienced losses in the millions in flood damage.

Attorney Frank Van Dyke discouraged the group in moving too fast, stating that he could understand some sections of the county objecting to a county-wide levy to correct a problem they consider limited to the Bear creek basin proper. He foresaw a need for legislation to make any program possible.

A Mutual Problem

Dave Hendrix, county water master, described the problem as a mutual one in which everyone is involved in some way. He noted the need for upstream storage to take the peak off the excessive storms.

Clem Ault, of the Soil Conservation service, expressed doubt that cities, county and irrigation districts could handle the problem alone. He said much of the trouble could have been averted if the suggested dam sites had been used.

Robert Carstensen, Jackson county engineer, emphasized the number of agencies and individuals to be considered in solution of one drainage problem such as that of Crooked creek. Streams meander through public and private lands, he explained, and there are many legal hurdles to clear in planning drainage programs.

Describe Problems

City officials of Medford, Ashland, Jacksonville, Gold Hill, Phoenix, Central Point and Eagle Point described their problems. The common practice of many citizens dumping bottles, tires and other debris into streams was loudly condemned.

In this same area, Col. Paul H. Weiland of the Izaak Walton League asked for more strict enforcement of the existing laws. He urged action to maintain watershed management and condemned construction which chokes any stream. The county has a responsibility in this area, he insisted, as some bridge construction has been at fault.

City Manager Robert Duff of Medford said the city was sitting in the middle in the December flood and got "everybody's water."

Has No Authority

The city, he explained, has no authority to go outside its boundaries to correct such a problem. He predicted that the people can't count on this problem arising only every 100 years. The county is becoming urbanized in a way to send water into channels with greater intensity, he added.

Mayor Freeman Mason of Central Point said if Medford would take care of its problem, Central Point wouldn't have one.

Mayor M. Steinmetz of Gold Hill described his city as the real dumping ground in the drainage problem and complained of the pollution which threatens the water supply from the river.

Charley Hoover, who has farmed in Jackson county for many years, learning the idiosyncracies of many streams and drains, asked that the farmers be heard. He objected to the emphasis on channel clearance, saying a word for consideration of all elements in nature, the timber, the wild life, the brooks and the ponds. He objected to all the people being taxed for the Bear creek problem.

Don Minear, Griffin Creek orchardist and farmer, reminded that there is federal money available for stream clearance. He said some concrete aprons have been constructed at too high a level and that many channels do need to be deepened.

Exaggerates Problem

Louis Ward of Hilton rd. charged that logging roads and freeway construction had exaggerated a problem, preventing the natural runoff of flood waters.

A petition carrying the names of 26 persons wanting action was mentioned by County Judge Earl Miller, who presided at the hearing.

Roy B. Sanderson and John Friday, Portland; and A. L. Harris, Medford, all with the U. S. Geological Survey, voiced their interest in conducting a survey of the flood. The suggestion met with wide approval and the meeting adjourned following Former County Commissioner Chester Wendt's recommendation that all decisions await such a survey.

Two Accidents Are Checked by Police

Two non-injury vehicle accidents were investigated by Medford police Thursday. No citiations were issued, officers said.

A city police car, parked at the rear of city hall, was damaged slightly when a vehicle operated by Francis Frederick Hibbard, 60, of 1302 Saling ave., backed into it about 10:40 a. m., according to reports.

Vehicles operated by Eston Cordell Mathewson, 16, of 302 Grape st., and Lee Roy Cox, 54, Grants Pass, collided about 6:17 p. m. at Eighth st. and Riverside ave., officers said.

HELP US!
We need clothing, shoes, dishes, furniture, and bedding.
We Pick Up.
HELP OTHERS!
The Salvation Army
30 N. Holly
773-7335

You Specify...
...We'll Satisfy
Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Other California Points.
Call Jack Fitzgerald, 773-7761
LASME Los Angeles-Seattle Motor Express, Inc.

LOOK AT THE BARGAINS! IT'S WEEKS & ORR'S HUGE

71ST ANNIVERSARY SALE

OUR ONLY STORE-WIDE SALE THIS YEAR!

Savings from 10 to 50%
on Every Piece of Furnishings
with exception of Beauty Rest, Posture-Pedic and Perfect Sleeper mattresses and box springs.

3 Floors of Furniture—all at DISCOUNT PRICES Waiting for your Selection!

RIVIERA CONVERTIBLE SOFAS
A full-size innerspring mattress, sleeps two, easily and comfortably. Yours with every Riviera convertible sofa. Converts any room into an extra bedroom. All hardwood frame, all steel bed unit, full guarantee. And look at the low, low price!

$99.50

SEE OUR HUGE SELECTION OF SLEEP SOFAS THE LARGEST WE'VE HAD ALL YEAR!

SALE
INCLUDES ALL
Living room, dining room, bedroom furniture, lamps, desks, cedar chests, rugs, mirrors, bunk beds, chairs, rockers, mattresses and box springs plus many miscellaneous items.

1/2 PRICE BARGAIN WINDOW
Lamps, Furniture, Rugs, etc. . . . New items added daily!

SEALY CHANGED THE COVER AND
YOU SAVE $20.00
ONLY $39.88 Mattress or box spring, twin or full size
This mattress is $59.95 quality where it counts! It has *all* the inner construction features and the smooth, button-free surface of Sealy's $59.95 Health Flex mattress. Sealy buying power made possible a special purchase of the all new, full 8-oz. woven stripe cover that's extra durable. Quantities limited at this sale price; don't miss it!

BED & DRESSER SET
Walnut or Blond Cabinet Head Board Bed $89.95

BED & DRESSER SET
Blond Finish, 8-Drawer Dresser, Large Mirror $99.95

Matching 5-Drawer Chest $35.

CARPET REMNANTS
1/3 to 1/2 Price!
Large Selection of Colors and Sizes

WEEKS & ORR
114 West Main Street Phone 772-9351

EASY TERMS
Convenient credit terms arranged with no carrying charges or interest—we carry our own contracts—AT WEEK'S & ORR you pay ONLY for the merchandise. Shop and save at Southern Oregon's oldest and largest furniture store.

Park Shop