

Temperature May Climb Some Today As County Recovers From Worst Blizzard in Many Years

Sumas, Everson Again in Contact; Some Utilities Back; Wind Not Expected To Be As Strong

A note of cautious optimism appeared in the weather forecast for Sunday, after Whatcom county spent an exhausting Saturday digging out of possibly the worst blizzard to hit here this century.

There would be cloudiness and occasional snow Sunday, weather forecasters said. But they saw no indications that the bitter winds of Friday night and Saturday morning would return. They even hinted the mercury would climb upward a bit before night fall Sunday.

Residents crept from their extra blankets Saturday morning to find sunlight beginning to glare off miles of drifted snow. Weather permitting they were told by utility and road officials, things might be more or less normal within two or three days.

Many points on the county map were isolated from time to time. Drifts from 10 to 14 feet in height blocked many roads, but began to yield stubbornly to the onslaught of men and machines.

Rotary plows, bulldozers and road graders bit into the frozen mass, and highways to principal communities were opened to vital supply first. The plows then turned on the connecting roads.

Lynden was opened to supply traffic before Friday night expired amid the dying blasts of the northern powerhouse. Around midnight the supply convoy, inching behind two bulldozers, reached Everson. It was 4 below zero—the wind at 50 m.p.h.

SUMAS SIEGE LIFTED

From Everson, the convoy of fuel, bakery and milk trucks, with state patrol vehicles, struck out for Su-

mas, a seven-mile trip. The convoy made it in five hours.

Arrival brought Sumas, as completely isolated as any town in the county, into the state patrol's emergency communication network. Previous contact with the outside had been through "ham" radio amateurs and immigration patrolmen.

Saturday, two Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific freight trains hit drifts a mile north of Everson, and were abandoned by the crews. **FARM FAMILIES SUFFER**

Farm families in all parts suffered through the long night and morning without hot water, heat or supplies; those dependent upon power for heat and water were in serious straits. Many remained in a similar situation Saturday, as power and telephone men found the dawn no relief, except from the 60 to 75-mile-an-hour gusts.

In Bellingham, conditions were not much better for many residents. Pipes were frozen, telephones silent, power was off, then on, then off again. Tree branches—and in some cases trees—slammed about the houses. Signs crumpled. Bus service was stopped "cold." Water pressure for firemen was endangered in parts because of running taps which householders tried to keep open.

Screeching, snow-laden gusts did more than put drifts back where men tried to remove them. At the Bellingham airport, they ripped a 75-foot beacon tower, made of steel, from its moorings. That was about 10:30 p. m. Earlier wind ripped the roof from a private hangar, carried

it 200 feet, and dropped it without a splinter. Two small planes inside the collapsing hangar were damaged.

Great Northern railway tracks were blocked by a drift some 1,500 feet in length until a Seattle rotary plow cleared it away Saturday. Southbound passengers waited at Blaine two hours, then returned to Vancouver, B. C., Friday night, to search for hotel space.

FAMILY SEEKS REFUGE

Back in the city, meanwhile, street department workers did all they could to help fuel men deliver. Police transported one family of a mother and four children to city hall when a Humboldt street home suffered a frozen oil fuel line. A repairman, in the absence of the man of the family, went to thaw out the pipe.

City busses ventured out again Saturday morning, after having been battered and blown from the streets at 6 p. m. Friday.

National guard officers here were told by the state adjutant general's office to put military vehicles to work with the highway department crews.

Expectant mothers probably suffered the greatest combination of physical and mental anguish. One arrived by horse-drawn sleigh (separate story, page 5), and two others were brought to medical care by the state patrol. They were Mrs. Vernon Eden and Mrs. Rhoda Cyr.

RUGGED INDIVIDUALISTS

Emergency actions of individuals were so frequently spectacular they could not all be reported.

A Puget Sound Pound & Light lineman, Virgil J. Steward, Lynden, repaired both power and phone lines between Lynden and Everson Saturday, making the trip on foot. Practice was for line crews to follow plows, but there weren't enough men to handle it all.

Gene Wight, Mission road resident near Ferndale, fought his way for a mile and a half to his home Friday night. A dairy trucker, he hadn't been able to make it for three days, was worried over his family, which was without heat. His ears were frostbitten.

A group of truck drivers for oil, bread and milk concerns started for the county areas at 11 a. m. Friday, finally became marooned in Laurel, and made it home at 11 p. m.

The record yielded weather comparisons in recent years, but they did

not equal the force or wind and snow felt here Friday. On January 20, 1937, the mercury dropped to 4 below—which temperature was also reported in some spots during the week end—and on January 17, 1943, it was recorded at 1 degree above.