

North Whatcom Still Harassed by Storm Hangover

Trees Uprooted by Roaring River
As Ice Jam in Nooksack Breaks Up
At Midnight; Sumas Phones Still Out

Weather was still dictator over much of the northern portion of Whatcom county today.

A driving rain Saturday night on top of a silver thaw after more than two weeks of snow and sub-freezing temperatures made communications—roads, telephone and power lines—a mess.

An ice jam in the Nooksack west of the Guide Meridian bridge broke at midnight and started down the river, tearing out trees along its banks, the state patrol radioed.

The Mile bridge was reported "rocking like a baby" as the backed up water swirled beneath.

The jam started at Everson early in the day, passed down river like an orange down an ostrich's neck and finally lodged in an S curve where it hung until shortly before midnight.

HEADS FOR FERNDALE

The jam was expected to hit Ferndale early today.

Although the river came up but four inches Saturday, the ice, it was feared, might act as a dam and spill the water over the bottom lands, flooding farms in the delta.

At Marietta the river was still frozen over, increasing the danger of blocking the river.

Radio was the only communication linking Sumas this morning with the outside world. A telephone wire crew got three-fourths of the way from Everson to the border town Saturday before darkness made it too dangerous to continue. Wire Chief L. E. Bratz said. It expected to reach Sumas this morning.

A Pacific Telephone radio truck was in Sumas to transmit emergency messages out via Vancouver, B. C., mobile station. Other towns had long distance service, Everson being reached at 3:30 p. m., Saturday.

Elsewhere in the county, officials reported nearly half of the Farmer's Mutual Telephone company's 6,000 subscribers were without phone service.

POWER RESTORED

Also snapped by the ice load of the silver thaw were hundreds of Puget Sound Power and Light company's electrical wires. Seven line crews, including special ones from Seattle and Burlington, were repairing the power lines. Service was restored to Everson at 5:30 p. m. and Sumas later.

Roads were still icy slick throughout the county, Commissioner E. R. Haxton said. But damage to the soft, thawing roads from heavy vehicle travel was beginning to worry the commissioners.

"We may have to do something about load limits Monday,"

Haxton said.

The entire area Saturday from Lynden to Sumas—Sumas was worst hit of all—was solidly coated with ice. Streets and roads were like glass. A telephone official who went into Sumas Friday morning said that driving a car at 10 miles an hour even with chains was hazardous, and walking on streets and around homes was dangerous.

Power and telephone repairmen who left their trucks to get to poles 10 feet off the road had sometimes to crawl on hands and knees.

SCENIC BUT DANGEROUS

Cars left out were sheathed with ice an inch thick, with icicles hanging. They made a beautiful sight, telephone repair chief Bratz said, as did all the rest of the countryside—but one that held danger from

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the standpoint of wrecks, falls and broken wires.

Most of the trouble for the power and telephone crews occurred about 9 a. m. Friday when the silver thaw was at its peak. Men working on line breakages would have other lines fall down on either side of them.

"I never saw so much ice in my life," one man said, referring to trees, poles, lines, roads, fields.

Around noon Friday some thaw, or melting, set in but iced over again.

Saturday as the phone crews sought to get Everson back into service, melting ice caused shortages on those lines that had not broken and beset the crews with further trouble.

Farmers Mutual Telephone men succeeded in getting two circuits open into Everson at 2:30 p. m. Saturday and an hour later the Pacific Telephone crews had restored two of its circuits to that city.

The Mutual lines went in from the south, where conditions were less rigorous, and the Pacific long distance lines from the north and west.

ICE BREAKING UP

On the Nooksack, the river was breaking up the ice Saturday night.

Open water that lasted for perhaps a quarter of a mile gave way to ice again at the "S" curve in the river near the Herman Rickenbacker farm on the River road. Residents feared a general ice break would send the ice and water rushing over the dike at that point.

The open water, gurgling out from under the ice at a point three-quarters of a mile west of the big bridge, flowed freely until it hit the "S" curve ice pack.

Earlier the water had been seen spouting free as it burst through the slush.

SOME RESIDENTS LEAVE

A number of the residents along River road had been evacuated during the night. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Raddar and son, Lowell, who moved out at 1 a. m., Saturday, to stay with relatives, the Herman Nobach Jr. family, at route 1, Lynden.

Raddar, however, returned along the ice-covered road to milk his cows.

Some of the largest ice flows, broken off by the speedy thaw, measured from 14 to 24 inches thick.