

Mercury Skids to 2 Below Zero Here; Schools to Reopen

Thermometers Register Coldest Weather
Here Since 1943; Northeast Wind Abates;
More Snow Falls; Southerly Winds Forecast

Light snow began to fall in Bellingham as temperatures slowly rose Wednesday afternoon following the lowest officially recorded minimum here since the war. The mercury hit 2 degrees below zero about 5 o'clock Wednesday morning.

City schools were scheduled to open Thursday morning after a two-day recess during the latest storm, while Western Washington college, which bowed to the elements Wednesday for the first time, was "likely" to open.

A predicted change in wind to the southeast held the hope of relief from abnormally low temperatures, but was not due until Thursday.

No announcement on reopening was available from county schools except Blaine which vetoed the suggestion. All were closed Wednesday.

Supt. C. Paine Shangle said at 2 p. m. that it appeared possible to heat classrooms satisfactorily and all city schools, including Geneva, Silver Beach and Marietta, would hold sessions.

President W. W. Haggard reserved a final decision on college classes until late Wednesday or early Thursday morning.

NORTHEASTER DIES

Paradoxically, city residents were more comfortable Wednesday, after the thermometer dropped under the minus mark officially for the first time in six years, than they were Tuesday, when the average was 6 degrees higher.

Absence of a driving northeaster accounted for the relief, the wind being from the same direction but dying down to less than 10 miles an hour early in the morning. Later in the day it picked up to 12, however.

State highways were in "pretty good shape," however, with crews knocking off Tuesday's work at 1 a. m. the next day. They resumed work later Wednesday with the state's rotary plows going after the most crucial county road blocks.

Supt. Everett Baxter said snow was well packed on the highways, providing a relatively good surface.

An attempt to blast loose the ice jam near the Marietta bridge was scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, but hopes were not too high that the dynamite would shake the block loose and send the ice down the

(Please Turn to Page 3, Column 3)

January 25, 1950

Mercury Skids to 2 Below Zero Here; Schools to Reopen

(From Page One)

mouth of the Nooksack to the bay.

County roads were still a patchwork, some readily negotiable, others still closed. However bus service to all county points was re-instituted on normal schedules, and North Coast Greyhound busses were leaving and arriving on time.

Absence of snow and strong winds was allowing road crews to make substantial progress in opening roads.

ANOTHER STORK RUN

Again a snow plow was assigned to the job of clearing the way for a maternity run. Mrs. Kenneth Smith, route 2, Ferndale, was brought to St. Joseph's about 5 p. m. Tuesday by the state patrol after drifts were removed from the Thornton road northwest of Ferndale.

The Smith child had not made its appearance early Wednesday afternoon.

Mrs. Fred Finkbonner's child, a boy, was born at 1:25 a. m. Wednesday after she was brought to the same hospital following clearing of the road to Neptune Beach but the imminence of the birth "sneaked up on her so fast she hadn't got him named" yet.

Both maternity cases were in the county's northwest area, but Commissioner E. R. Haxton was hopeful that such emergency road clearing would be unnecessary after Wednesday. He expected that all roads in that area would be at least passable by evening.

FERRY BACK ON RUN

The commissioners announced that the county ferry Chief Kwina would go on a two-hour schedule at noon Wednesday. Opening of the road to Marietta and Gooseberry Point restored transportation to Lummi island by ferry. The Chief Kwina left the mainland at noon and was to make a trip to the island every even-numbered hour afterward.

assist.

Cold air again snapped the telephone circuit to Sumas at 6 o'clock in the morning, but crews repaired the break four hours later. Pacific Telephone Manager G. W. Benedict said all toll lines were in service and only scattered trouble remained.

Though supplies reportedly were running low in isolated districts of the county, there was little danger of anyone freezing in Bellingham from lack of fuel.

Dealers said some coal is on hand and the supply will be bolstered Thursday by the scheduled arrival of a barge from Vancouver island. Wood was scarce, though enough to handle emergency cases was available. Oil was present in normal quantities.

Some heating problems resulted from plumbing failures due to cold and wind but the typical house complication was lack of hot or cold water or both because of frozen pipes.

All bus routes were being served Wednesday, Manager Alex Klaus of City Lines reported, though occasional delays were reported. Some busses had missed trips Tuesday because slippery streets caused skidding into ditches.

All City Lines vehicles had chains and were prepared to operate normally under foreseeable conditions.

LOWEST IN SEVEN YEARS

The Soil Conservation Service reported that the subzero temperature Wednesday was the coldest reading for January in seven years at its Smith and McLeod road nursery.

The thermometer there registered minus 1.75 degrees, comparable to the 2 degrees below noted in January, 1943. Other frigid January readings were 4 below in 1937 and 4 below in 1929.

Rural areas also were below zero at times during the early morning hours. The temperature at Mount Baker lodge was minus 8 degrees and at Shuksan minus 5 degrees at 8 o'clock and was probably lower earlier.

A Lake Samish housewife reported her thermometer got down to 14 degrees below zero!

Improved road conditions brought a brighter aspect for rural areas which had been without power. The major population concentrations again had service, including Sumas and Everson, which got electricity Tuesday afternoon, and Manager John Wallin, of Puget Power, expected that only individual customers would need attention after Wednesday night.

Good progress was made late Tuesday, he said, and was continuing Wednesday. Hard-worked linemen were getting help and some relief from the company's Whidbey island personnel, and two more crews were due in from Seattle to