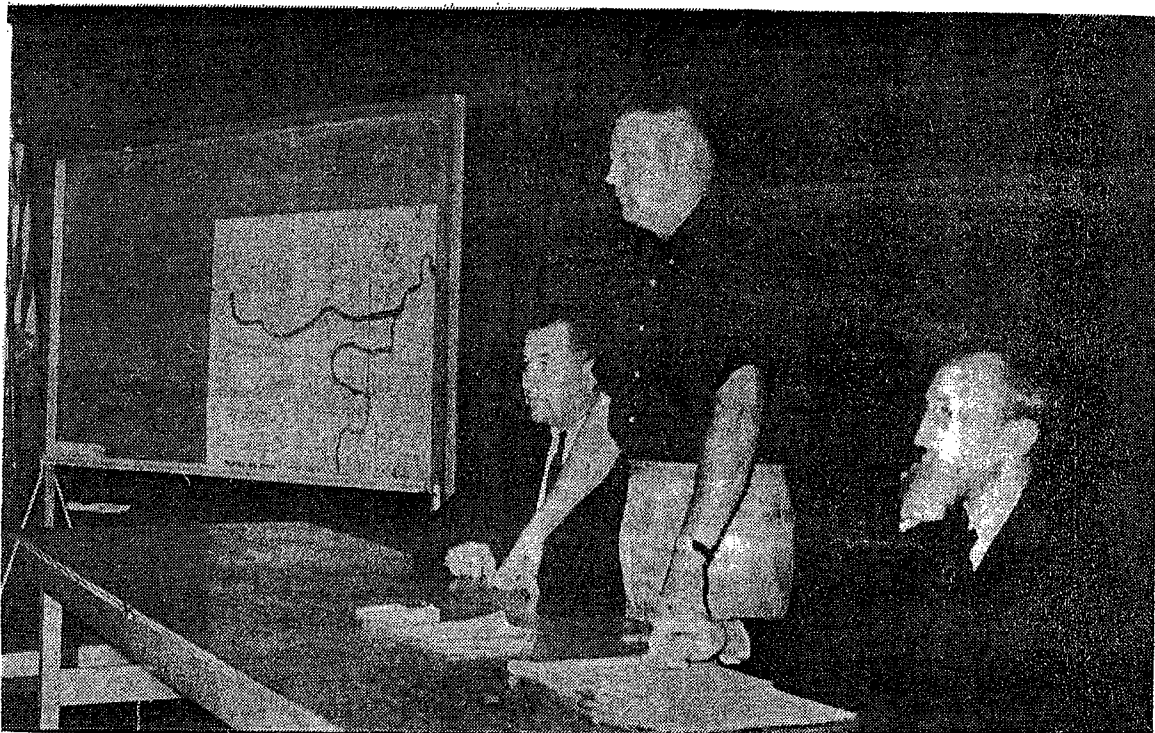


# THE MOUNT VERNON ARGUS



**SPOKESMEN AT BYPASS PROTEST** — President, left, Warren Good, Norman Dahlstedt, and Ray Billups at "Avon Bypass" protest meeting in Burlington Monday night (map shows project) were from

8.29.63

## Cost Big Factor in Bypass Protests

"Pros" as well as "cons" came out of the meeting called at the Burlington community building Monday night to voice objections to the "Avon bypass" flood control project.

Warren Good and Norman Dahlstedt, farmers and truckers, and Ray Billups, custom carpet expert who lives in the bypass area, presided at the head table, voiced their own objections and called for audience reactions.

From the audience of more than 60 farmers and businessmen, and some women, came many objections and questions, also strong declarations of support for the flood protection project.

Dahlstedt said he and others seriously questioned whether the flood overflow channel proposal would give adequate protection and would justify its \$19 million estimated cost. He also said there was doubt that this would be found the final maximum cost by possibly many more millions of dollars.

Billups said the cost would run to 20 cents per \$50 of property valuation, storm sewers emptying into the project would

be blocked, protection would not be provided upstream residents, and there would be 16 miles more of dikes to maintain.

Good questioned validity of the project and declared it would saddle debt on his children and grandchildren. He suggested it would be better to clean out the Skagit river mouth and channel.

Conceding there was a flood danger from the river, Dahlstedt said the questions were whether "we can afford this" and whether "we want this or something else."

The men conducting the meeting circulated a paper on which audience members were asked to sign their willingness to serve on committees to be formed to present the case of the objectors.

Roger Hulbush, Burlington chamber of commerce president, said he was attending the meeting for information. He read a letter from Jim Agen, Cascade Frozen Foods owner, who could not be present. In the letter Agen asserted it was "not worth \$20 million to take a few feet off a minor flood."

Agen asserted the county had been "brained-washed by the

Corps of Engineers and the chamber of commerce of Mount Vernon." He declared Burlington as a city had a greater growth potential than either Anacortes or Mount Vernon, but its room to expand would be blocked were the Avon bypass to be built, south of that community as proposed.

"Pros" for the project were voiced by several farmers and diking commissioners as well as by County Engr. Lloyd Johnson and Ray Skrinde, of the army engineers.

"I don't think we should turn this down," said Noble Lee, Fir Island farmer and dike commissioner. "It will be giving us some security . . . making this a better county and a safer place to live."

Jim Hulbert, longtime La-Conner farmer, said he had seen "water from Stanwood to Edison" and warned "you are going to have some more floods some day." The Avon bypass is "the only thing they (the U. S. Engineers) have ever recommended," Hulbert went on. "It would be very foolish to laugh this off . . . to turn it down."