

THE CONCRETE HERALD

Formerly the Hamilton Herald Established Nov. 23, 1901. Oldest Paper in the Upper Skagit.

September 18, 1968

BAKER POWER PLANT BACK ON THE LINE

Kilowatts, which had been flowing past the Lower Baker River Powerhouse since the slide of May 1965 were being collected again this week and put to work on the power grid of Puget Sound Power & Light. The new powerhouse, which houses the 70,000 kilowatt generator salvaged from the disaster, is now in official operation although testing and the usual shakedown of "bugs" will continue until all equipment is operating efficiently.

The reconstruction of the hydro-electric facility included the construction of a new power house with a sloping roof that will eliminate the chance of any damage from future slides. It was also necessary to rebuild the old surge tank with solid concrete, replacing the former steel tank that had added the extra height required when the last generator was installed.

Work on the project was done by the Bechtel Corporation and was started in the spring of 1967. The cost of the completed project has been set at \$4,750,000. The company has been awarded \$5,144,645 from insurance following the destruction of the original plant.

New work done during the reconstruction included building of a switchyard on the hill above the powerhouse, across the road from the lookout point. The switches had been on the lower level and partially covered by mud in the slide. Most of the equipment was salvaged, but the new installation is much larger in scope and will handle future generating equipment that is planned for installation in the new powerhouse to double its present capacity.

While the Bechtel Corporation was on the job, the company had them renew all 23 of

the spillway gates on the dam. Eight of them were replaced with steel instead of wood and will be operated by remote control. The entire powerhouse has been designed for remote control operation from the Redmond Operation Center by solid state microwave units.

For the present the full operating crew will be on duty. As equipment proves out two of the operators will be transferred out and one man retained for an 8-hour shift a day and 24-hour call in emergencies. The balance of the crew, inside and outside, will still be required to service the two dams and their generating units.

NEW OFFICE BUILDING

The offices of the plant were formerly in the powerhouse in the powerhouse itself, but now an entirely new building is being completed beside the East Concrete highway near the fish trap. This modern structure will be a combination visitor's center and administration building. Work on this is nearing completion, the interior almost ready for occupation and the curbs and entrances now in for completion of the blacktop paving to cover the entire area from the fish traps to the office.

It is not expected that the new building will be in use until after the Bechtel office is closed as much of the furniture will be transferred from the old Washington plant office which the contractor has been using.