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POWER PROJECT IS BADLY DAMAGED BY HEAVY RAINSTORM

COFFERDAM OVERFLOWED DURING RAPID RISE IN BAKER RIVER-WORK MAY BE SERIOUSLY DELAYED AS RESULT

While the heavy rainstorms of Sunday and Monday were greatly appreciated in many communities in Western Washington for putting an end to the fire menace that was threatening heavy damage in many places, the Stone & Webster company is not giving any thanks for the rain. The Baker river power project suffered a monetary loss that will run into thousands of dollars, and the work of several weeks was entirely wiped out. But even more serious is the delay caused by the unexpected rise in the river. The power company has been working against time, using every effort to get the foundations of the huge dam in place before the danger of real floods in the river, and the freshet this week has set the work back from two weeks to a month and makes it that much more difficult to complete the required task this fall.

When the rains started last week it was not expected that they would continue long enough to raise the waters in the rivers to any considerable extent, but when it continued to rain all day Sunday, the rivers soon began to rise, and by Monday forenoon the Baker had reached a stage where the diversion tunnel was unable to carry all the water and the river was soon flowing over the cofferdam. The river continued to rise all day Monday, and when it reached its highest point there was four feet of water flowing over the dams. It is reported that the upper cofferdam was raised

three feet by the water, and if it had not been firmly anchored would have gone out.

The Stone & Webster Company had considerable heavy machinery between the two cofferdams, used in excavating for the foundations of the main dam, including a steam shovel and three large suction pumps, with the operating motors and other equipment. These were all covered by water and sand and will have to be overhauled before they can again be used.

The dam foundation between the two cofferdams was made into a lake and was filled to a considerable depth with sand, and much of the trestle work and other structures on the dam site were washed out. Before the company will be back to the point of its operations it had reached Saturday the water between the cofferdams will have to be drained off, the machinery and equipment dried out and overhauled, and the sand and gravel deposited by the river excavated. It is estimated that this will require more than two weeks.