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INCIDENT REPORT - PRIEST RAPIDS DAM FLOW
CURTAILMENT - JANUARY 7, 1961

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R. T. Jaske, Supervisor
Water Plant & Utilities Engineering
Plant Engineering Operation
FACILITIES ENGINEERING

INCIDENT REPORT
PRIEST RAPIDS DAM FLOW CURTAILMENT
JANUARY 7, 1961

SUMMARY

As a result of mechanical damage (caused by falling rocks) to the power line supplying station power, Priest Rapids Dam lost all generating flow at 4:23 p.m., cutting discharge from 71,700 cfs to about 12,000 cfs. Within five minutes, spillway gates were opened, bringing river flow back to greater than 36,000 cfs in about 10 minutes. The flow at 181-B dropped from 72,000 cfs to a minimum of 56,000 cfs at about 5:25 p.m. Priest Rapids generators returned to service at 4:45 p.m., the indicated flow at the gauge reaching 71,700 cfs again at about 8:00 p.m. River temperatures at the gauge increased 0.5 C following the interruption, but not at 181-B.

Prompt HAPO notification of the flow reduction as provided for in the agreement between the PUD and the AEC was not made on this occasion; our first notice came from the 251 Substation.

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The contractor's temporary power line supplying station power to Priest Rapids generators relayed at 4:23 p.m. This was due to a falling rock from an adjoining cliff breaking off the top of a power pole half-way between Midway and the dam.

This shut down the plant and flow dropped from 71,700 cfs to 10 to 12,000 cfs (no load flow). Priest Rapids turbines No. 6, 7 and 8 relayed instantly.

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The other two units, No. 5 and 10, were taken off manually to avoid the automatic trip required by the present temporary hook-up during the transformer rewinding program.

An operator was sent up to the next floor to the emergency generator room to start the diesel generator. After the generator was operating, an operator pushed the warning siren button, opened No. 2, 3 and 4 spillway gates, and shortly thereafter, No. 9 gate. The gates open one foot per minute and pass 1,000 cfs per foot at the pool level at the time. The spill washed out the roadway on the cofferdam below the spillway. There are two cofferdams near the dam: one below the spillway built by Good-fellow Brothers, and the other by Merritt-Chapman-Scott. It was reported that one construction operator was caught on the roadway and had to be rescued.

The flow at the gauge station 1.6 miles below the dam dropped to 48,000 cfs and former flow did not return till near 8:00 p.m.

No HAPO operation was affected. The flow at 181-B dropped to an indicated minimum flow of 56,000 cfs an hour after the outage. Although turbidity rose from 4 ppm to 10 ppm, the Power Operations reported this caused no problem. River temperature at the gauge increased 0.5 C following the incident, due largely, we believe, to re-entry to the river of bank storage. Temperatures at the areas did not reflect this increase.

First notification of the trouble came from HAPO's 251 Substation dispatcher who called H. A. Kramer at 5:45 p.m. We have emphasized to the PUD our need for immediate notification. Later communication was with the Ephrata load scheduler.

Telephone difficulties arose from the fact that the Columbia River Telephone Company was using the Midway to PUD micro-wave to dispatch the installation of a new telephone line across the river near Midway.

Harry A. Kramer

Water Plant & Utilities Engineering
Plant Engineering Operation
FACILITIES ENGINEERING

J. P. Corley

Water Plant & Utilities Engineering
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HA Kramer:JP Corley:dl

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