

# TOWNS ALONG RIVERS Evacuated; Water In Eel Over 1955 Level

Flood and gale stricken Humboldt County appeared headed for further disaster this afternoon as the swollen rivers and streams continue to rise, a high ocean tide due to back up the torrents at mid-afternoon, and a new storm on the way.

The Eel River at 10:45 a. m. was just under 27 feet, ten feet over flood stage.

Most low-lying areas were evacuated during the night or were being evacuated today, but some sectors are totally inaccessible due to the volume and swiftness of the flood.

There is no known loss of human life, but a number of persons are stranded, especially in the Eel River delta area, and at Starvation Flat of Carletona. Three sheriff's deputies are reported among those cut off.

Several homes have been reported lost in the flood waters, but the Civil Disaster office in the basement of the county Courthouse here was so jammed and communications so poor that specific cases could not be pinpointed.

The towns of Orick, Rio Dell, Shively, Pepperwood, Myers Flat, Miranda, Phillipsville and Klamath all were ordered evacuated, with Civil Disaster Office chairman Norman R. Robertson declaring Humboldt a disaster area last night.

Robertson, along with assistant director Ted Gumble, the full force of the sheriff's department with Marine and Mounted Police volunteers and the National Guard reserve have been in the field and on headquarters duty throughout the night and day.

Some of the roads and bridges which were restored after the 1955 flood are going out in the present one, Assemblyman Frank Belmont reported. Shortly before 10 a.m. PG&E reported the bridge at Redway lost, and there was four feet of water over the Howard Creek bridge.

Sandy Prairie levee at Fortuna, at first reported breached, was holding fast but the rock revetment upstream near the confluence of the Van Duzen was wiped out for half a mile of its length, flooded the south end of Fortuna and covering the Highway 101 freeway with water there.

Fortuna Trailer Park, badly hit in 1955, also was evacuated, as was the metropolitan area.

## Call For Boats

Captain Edward Hulbert of the sheriff's department, in the field all night, was calling for boats in the area east of Alton this morning. Army "ducks" which had attempted rescues in the Lodieta and Ferndale bottoms were turned back by the rushing torrents, and units of the U.S. Coast Guard's motor lifeboats were scheduled to go into the area if possible.

Colonel Robert Allan of the U. S. Corps of Engineers and a Corps detachment are scheduled to arrive here this afternoon via Pacific Airlines, but a group of helicopters, requested from Hamilton Field, by Robertson during the night for rescue work, could not get off the

ground due to the gale-force winds.

Undersheriff Gene Cox, also on directional and dispatch duty throughout the night, attempted to dispatch the Army "ducks" into the Cannibal Island and Stafford areas, but they were forced back there also.

## Redwood Creek

In the north, Redwood Creek at Orick had reached more than 23 feet this morning and was reported by a sheriff's deputy to be "running wild", with flooding in the streets and a three-foot rise in a single hour.

Winds at Freshwater Lagoon were reported in excess of 75 miles per hour, and a large number of motorists were reported stranded in the area as well as elsewhere throughout the county. Several are said to be lost.

At 8:30 a.m. Mark Nelson of Orick reported "several houses" gone down the river but all the occupants are believed to have reached safety. Morale in the area is reported low, largely due to heavy property losses, and units of the Guard Reserve were dispatched to that community as well as to southern Humboldt.

Willow Creek also is reported flooding, with electric power out there, at Blocksburg and Petrolia. Telephone service was out at Petrolia, Orick and Bridgeville and toll circuits in the West area also are out.

The Freshwater and Bayside regions were under water, along with the lowlands from Bella Vista Hill to the ocean.

Heavy equipment of the Arthur B. Sini Company at the mouth of the Mad River was reported submerged, with no chance of getting it out until the water subsides.

Four persons were reported stranded on an island of high ground at the Little Golden Gate subdivision west of Bridgeville with no means of reaching them, four others were reported in a barn at Camp Grant on the south fork of the Eel, and two on top of a house in or near Ferndale.

Fortuna this morning called for 50 cots for flood refugees.

Alex Jett, administrator of Humboldt County Community Hospital, was directed by Robertson to accept emergency flood victims if required, and all other hospitals in the county were placed on stand-by alert.