



**Trip Report of Lightning Creek Trail Snow Survey Accident
Skagit River - February 3, 1947**

Sterling Osborne and Stanley Dragnich, USGS-Tacoma, were two of the regular USGS snow surveyors contracted by Seattle City Light to take snow measurements in the upper Skagit River Basin. Following are descriptions of their account of an accident that nearly claimed the life of Stanley Dragnich on the final day of a six day trip.

**Typical travel itinerary for the Lightning and Freezeout creeks
snow survey trip**

- Day 1** Drive from Hope, BC to the logging camp at the U.S. – Canadian boundary (Hozomeen). Take Lightning Creek trail to Deer Lick cabin.
- Day 2** Travel from Deer Lick cabin to Freezeout Creek Cabin.
- Day 3** Up the trail 3-4 miles to Freezeout Meadows and measure the snow course. Back to the cabin and measure the course there.
- Day 4** Back to Deer Lick cabin.
- Day 5** Measure Lightning Creek snow course and stream gage. Spend another night at Deer Lick cabin.
- Day 6** Back down the Lightning Creek trail to logging camp and drive home.

Stanley Dragnich's Description

These remarks are set down to relate the events of snow survey trip made January 29 to February 3, 1947, S.W. Dragnich and S.R. Osborne, in upper Skagit River Basin. This information may be of help to other parties making the same trip, and for future planning of snow surveys.

On January 29 we drove from Hope, BC to the logging camp at the U.S. – Canadian Boundary. After having lunch there drove another 8 miles to within a mile and a half of the end of the road. At this point there was a 4' tree across the road, so we had to park the car there. I doubt if we could have driven much further because of the deep snow and the road conditions.

At this point we donned snowshoes and shouldered our packs. It was 1:30 pm when we left the car and started up the trail. The going for the first one and a half miles wasn't bad until we started up the hill trail. This was slow going because we had to break trail though 8" of new snow. However, we made the hill without too much difficulty, and then the trail took off across the side hill with slight upgrade. This was

difficult to traverse because of steep slope and the snowshoes kept wanting to forever slide downhill. On several occasions either Osborne or I would lose our footing and slide downhill 10 or 15 feet, and would have to be helped back up to the trail. This was done by one of us sticking our ski pole down as far as he could reach, and the other grabbing it and pulling up and onto the trail.

We got along pretty well until we had to cross several ice flows resulting from water flowing down the mountain ravines. This made a solid ice layer under about 4" to 6" of loose snow. These ice flows were hard to cross, and we had to inch our way, hoping that we didn't lose our footing because there was nothing between us and Lightning Creek about 1000 feet below. An icy bath, to say nothing of a broken arm or leg, was not very appealing at this time of the year.

It was while on one of those ice flows, which were on about a 50 degree slope, that I did lose my footing, and started on the way down. Luckily, I managed to grab a small brush 1/2" in diameter, about 15 feet down, the only growth of any kind all the way to the bottom. Not having gathered too much momentum, this small brush held. There I was, hanging to this brush with my finger tips, a pack on my back, and my feet twisted up in my snowshoes, unable to move. Osborne, who was in the lead and about half-way across, had to inch his way to the other side, take off his snowshoes and come down along the edge of the ice to the rescue. All this was taking time, and when he finally got there my fingers were numb and the strength entirely gone. Another minute and I would have had to let go.

Fortunately, he arrived in time and unfastened my snowshoes. This gave me the use of my feet, and I was able to pull myself up and out. The rest of the trip to Deer Lick cabin was made without mishap. We arrived there about an hour after dark, both tired and cold. The cabin was well stocked with food, but I was too tired to eat much of anything. The stove in this cabin was a fairly good one, but the wood situation was terrible, with very little dry wood and a considerable quantity of green Alder that was almost dripping with water. We didn't want to burn all the dry wood, so tried to burn the green wood with it; consequently, the temperature in the cabin never rose above 42 degrees.

By the time we had eaten and washed the dishes, it was rather late, so decided to go to bed and get plenty of rest for the trip next day to Freezeout cabin. We knew this would require all our strength, since we had to pack a quantity of grub with us, along with all the rest of our equipment.

January 30

After a fair night's sleep we had breakfast and cleaned up the cabin, packed our packs and prepared to leave. We left the cabin at 9:30 am, thinking that this would be plenty of time to arrive at Freezeout cabin before dark, which is all we intended to do that day. The going for the first two miles wasn't too bad, although breaking trail was difficult, and we alternated every two or three hundred feet.

However, once we started up from the bottom and began going up and across the steep slopes the going became more difficult. The snow had completely filled in the trail and every two or three steps your snowshoes would slip out from under you and slide down the hill, with you grabbing for anything within reach. This sliding placed a great strain on your ankle and leg muscles, so in a short time they were aching from fatigue. This continued hour after hour, and along early in the afternoon both of us were beginning to give out. Time after time one of us would slide down the hill, and

would have to be helped back up to the trail. We would alternate breaking trail and about three or four hundred feet was all that one could stand. It would only be possible to go 30 or 40 feet before stopping to rest, even at that. This kept going in an endless cycle, and soon it started to get dark. We were still 1-1/2 or 2 miles from the cabin. This distance does not ordinarily seem long, but to me at that time it seemed like 10 miles. About this time I was having serious doubts of ever having enough strength to get there that night. I didn't think I could have made it, if it hadn't been for Osborne breaking trail almost all the way that last mile or two. As it was, it took us a full two hours to go that last mile, and we finally reached the cabin about 7:30 that evening.

We were both completely exhausted and neither of us gave a thought to having anything to eat, or even to light a cigarette. All we could do was sit near the stove too tired to say a word to each other.

The wood situation at this cabin was even worse than at the lower cabin, with very little dry wood and some wet bark pulled from trees the last trip and left in the cabin. However, there were other difficulties which were worse, I suppose. For one thing the stove would not function properly. The only thing emitting from it was a cloud of smoke and little or no heat. At times the smoke in the cabin was unbearable, and yet it did no good to open the door and clear air, for the stove continued to smoke no matter what you did to it.

After a couple of hours of sitting by the stove and trying to get warm we decided this was a hopeless task. We ate a little fruit, which is all we had any appetite for, and went to bed.

At this time we decided that we would stay in the cabin and rest up the next day; then go up and measure Freezeout Meadows snow course the next day. However, after spending a cold and sleepless night in that uncomfortable cabin, we thought we'd rather go up and measure the course even though we were tired, to avoid spending another night here.

January 31

After much coaxing we managed to get enough heat out of the stove to cook some breakfast. Then we washed the dishes, put on our packs and snowshoes, and started for the course. By this time it was late morning, but we figured we'd have plenty of time to get up there and return in good time. The going up to the course was not too difficult mainly because there were no steep slopes to cross, but a fairly even grade all the way. (About 3 or 4 miles). Of course, it was no easy job breaking trail, but we would alternate frequently, and made pretty fair time, reaching the course along about 2:00 pm.

The measuring conditions were excellent, and the work went on at a good pace. In about 2 hours we were through, and on our way back to the cabin. This return trip proved to be the easiest part of the entire trip. With a good broken trail and down hill grade we were at the cabin in a very short time.

At this time we renewed the hopeless job of getting a fire going in the stove, and the unpleasant experiences of the night before were again repeated. After much effort, though, we managed to prepare a meal and eat. Afterwards we decided to go out and measure Freezeout Creek Trail course, which ran along side the cabin, by using

a lantern and flashlight. We accomplished this without much trouble and retired to the cabin for the night.

February 1

We battled with the stove again this morning and decided we'd cut some dry wood and store it in the cabin before we left, so the next party would at least have some with which to build a fire. After breakfast, Osborne washed the dishes and I took the axe and upon locating a 10 inch dry fir, proceeded to fall it. Instead of falling it landed in another tree, but I cut enough dry blocks off the butt end to provide decent wood for the next party. I'm sure they'll find this satisfactory, although they'll very likely have to cut some for the party following them.

Cutting the wood consumed some time and it was about 10:00 am before we were ready to start the trip back to the lower cabin. We put on our snowshoes and packs, and left, thinking this would be a fairly easy trip as it was down hill most of the way. However, we hadn't reckoned with the 8 to 10 inches of new snow that had fallen the previous night, and which was coming down at a fast rate. We soon found out that the going would be much harder than we had anticipated for our tracks of two days earlier were completely obliterated and the task of breaking trail all the way back was before us.

At first it didn't seem so bad, as we were refreshed, and were going down hill, so we made pretty fair time. Along about noon the snow became heavy and wet, and before long both of us were wet to the skin. Of course, the branches were reaching their maximum load, and every few minutes one or both of us would be half covered with this snow that would come cascading down through the trees. We would have to spend a few minutes extricating ourselves before proceeding.

Anyway, after much sliding down hill, and being covered with snow, we reached the bottom of the hill, or a little more than half way to the cabin. From here on the going got really hard. By this time the snow was so wet that it kept packing up under our feet on the snowshoes, and after four or five steps it felt like you were trying to walk on a couple of rocks under each foot. This immediately became uncomfortable so every few steps we'd have to stop and dig out the snow that had packed up under our feet. The wet snow also started sticking to the snowshoes and every time you'd take a step it felt like you were picking up at least 20 pounds with each foot.

We alternated in breaking trail and the same process was repeated as the day went on. We'd take 30 or 40 feet and then stop to rest. I'm afraid that again Osborne did more than his share of trail breaking in the last mile or so, for I was exhausted and all my strength gone long before we reached the cabin. When we finally got there, both exhausted, Osborne complained about stomach cramps. I hoped it was nothing serious, and it turned out to be the result of extreme fatigue.

We had little thought of trying to save any of the dry wood in the cabin and used it exclusively to build as hot a fire as possible in order to dry out our clothing. Not having any other clothing, all we could do was keep the fire going, and try to dry the things we were wearing. Two hours later, we were halfway comfortable, with our clothes only damp, instead of dripping water. Five or six hours later we were ready to go to bed, our clothes still were not completely dry. After eating a quantity of soup and hot gingerbread (which Osborne specializes in) we felt much better.

February 2

This day passed without any event of consequence except one minor item which I will mention later. We had breakfast, cleaned up the cabin, and with packs and snowshoes started out to measure Lightning Creek and Lightning Creek Trail snow course. We decided to measure Lightning Creek first and then the snow course on our way back, figuring that we would be warmed up climbing out of the canyon up to the snow course. That way we wouldn't get so cold doing the sampling.

A few days earlier I had asked Osborne about the location of the Lightning Creek gage. He told me that it was necessary to put the gage above the mouth of Three Fools Creek, and that was why it was in such an inaccessible position. Presuming that he knew the location, I did not question him when he suggested leaving the trail to the gage, and pointing straight down into the canyon, just above the mouth of Three Fools Creek.

After skidding, sliding and plowing through the snow, we reached Lightning Creek just above the mouth of Three Fools Creek and seeing no gage Osborne started up the creek remarking that it should be a short distance upstream. I took out the station description and found that the gage was about 1/2 mile downstream instead. As we were not able to go down along the bank of the creek, we had to climb back up to where we'd left our snowshoes and follow the trail down to the gage.

We tossed a coin to see who would do the measuring, and Osborne lost. He put on the waders and made the measurement while I kept notes. We had difficulty with the wiring on the wading rod and lost considerable time fixing it and completing the measurement. We returned to the trail and measured the snow course, and then went back to the cabin. All in all this was a fairly easy day compared to the others we had spent, so we felt pretty good, knowing that tomorrow we would be going out on our way home.

February 3

After breakfast we put things in order at the cabin, cut some dry wood for the next party and started on our way out. For the first half mile or so (over the trail broken the day before) traveling was excellent. After this it was harder with the crust breaking through occasionally.

(I might add that this last part of the narrative is being written from a hospital bed weeks later, but will try to set down the events as they happened on that day, which as much as I'd like to, will never forget.)

When we had gone a mile or so we started crossing the steep slopes encountered on the first day of our trip. Two nights before, during the wet snow and rain, the snow on these slopes had become saturated to a point where every little draw had had a snow slide. The slide started at the top of the draw 1000 feet above, and ended about 1000 feet below at Lightning Creek. The following day it had frozen over, leaving nothing but a sheet of ice the full width of the draw.

These draws were numerous and had to be crossed with great care because we realized that one slip and you would roll all the way to the creek. As we had nothing with which to make foot holes, we'd take off our snow shoes, hang them on our arm and inch across, many times losing all footing and pulling ourselves across by hanging onto brush or anything we could reach with our hands. Our ski poles were of some help, for we'd stick them in the ice and place one foot against it for footing.

This continued all day, and once I lost my balance and grabbed for some brush, thereby losing one of my snowshoes. I had to crawl half way to the creek to retrieve it where it had lodged.

We had almost crossed these slides and had only two more to go. I was in the lead and had taken off my snowshoes, strapped them on my left arm, and started across the slide. I had my ski pole in my left hand, and had stuck it in the ice and placed my foot against it. With my right hand I was hanging onto a piece of brush on the upper side. I brought my right foot forward and tried to dent the ice for a toe hold, but instead my foot slid out causing me to lose my balance and go over on my face. Of course, I had gathered such momentum that when I tried to grab for something I couldn't hang onto it. I lost all sense of balance and plunged over a rock cliff and kept rolling down the slope.

My first thought as I went over was that my time to die had come. I was so sure of it that as I rolled and fell down the mountain and experienced such terrible pain, my only thought was that I hoped death would come suddenly and end that pain.

I think I remained conscious most of the way down but believe I was out when I stopped short of going over a 100 foot sheer cliff. I regained consciousness soon thereafter, and with much difficulty sat up. Blood from my face, nose and mouth was spurting out and fast discoloring the snow and ice a bright red. My first reaction was to feel for broken bones. I tried my legs and moved them a little to see if either was broken, and apparently they weren't. My left arm felt all right but my right shoulder was paining terribly and I knew that it was either dislocated or broken. While I was taking stock of the situation, Osborne was crawling down the slide towards me and I heard him yell at me somewhere above me. I tried to answer him and I guess he heard me, for 15 or 20 minutes later he reached me. At this time I was getting terribly cold and asked him to get my parka out of my pack (which was still on my back) and put it on me. He removed my pack and took off his wool shirt and put it and two parkas on me with great difficulty, since I couldn't move my right arm. He then helped me stand up and across the slide to the other side. It was then that I felt a severe pain in both hips. I was afraid they were broken or fractured. Upon reaching the other side this pain got so bad that I couldn't move and I knew it was no use trying to get out without help. Osborne suggested that he carry me out on his back. He insisted that he would not leave me alone. I persuaded him that the only thing we could possibly do was for him to go for help and I'd stay where I was.

Osborne finally agreed and struck out, not even going back up to get his snow shoes, for that would have taken an extra half hour. This was about 1:00 or 1:30 pm and it was some 8 hours later that he returned with help, through which time I suffered untold agonies. I'd stand on my feet until the pain in my hips became unbearable, and then would sit down in the snow, where I'd get so cold I had to stand again. All this time, my right shoulder pained terribly and any little movement would make it much worse. My face was still bleeding and now it felt as if it were freezing. I could do nothing about it except try to draw the parka hood closer around my head. I got terribly thirsty and tried to eat the snow and ice which was difficult because my upper lip and nose had swollen so much I could hardly open my mouth.

Hours later, it seemed to me an eternity, it started to get dark and then I wondered if Osborne would get back with help. I knew he had to go at least 3 or 4 miles through the waist deep snow to where we had parked the car and then drive 8 miles to the logging camp. I could imagine any number of things that could happen to him

to prevent his getting out. All this certainly was not the best for my piece of mind, but the only thing I could do was wait and wait.

Many times during the afternoon and evening I imagined hearing voices and whistling, but it turned out to be just my imagination, because I had so wanted to hear these things. After it got dark I was getting so cold that I had to move around to keep from freezing, so I started inching my way up to the trail, stopping only when the pain became unbearable. I knew I had to do this or freeze, but at times I thought I would pass out from the pain. I managed to get a little warmer and doing something made the time pass faster. After reaching the trail hours later I even contemplated crossing the last slide, but after one look at it I knew I could never make it.

Many hours later (or so it seemed to me) I saw the most welcome site I'd ever hoped to see, the rescue party coming up the hill with flashlights. There were several men in the party including Osborn, and they brought along a stretcher with which to carry me out. However, the trail, even though it had been well packed down, was too treacherous that no one could have managed a stretcher, so I walked out with a man in front of me with a flashlight and one behind me. They held me up occasionally when the pain in my shoulder and hips nearly made me pass out. The rest of the story is mostly routine. I was helped out over the trail a mile and a half to a pick-up truck towed behind a tractor and carried in this another two miles to the ambulance (all provided by the logging camp), and then driven to the logging camp, given first-aid there, and then taken by ambulance to the hospital at Chilliwack, BC. This was about 15 or 16 hours after the accident occurred, after a week at the hospital I was again transferred to the Madigan General Hospital at Fort Lewis, from which this is being written.

Before going any further I'd like to give some credit and praise where it is due. First, to Sterling Osborne, who certainly went through terrific hardships to get out and get help, and then lead the rescue party back to me. He preformed a feat that I would have considered impossible at one time, and much more quickly than most men could have done it.

Then to the men at the logging camp, who employed all the resources available to them and came in to rescue me, I will be grateful as long as I live.

In conclusion I would like to set forth the opinions I formed regarding snow surveys. These opinions are in no way influenced by the accident which befell me on that last day, but were formed during the previous days of the trip. I imagine this last statement will be questioned.

(Incidentally, I would like to note here that I lost a \$125 wrist watch in my fall down the mountain. This was a large financial loss to me, personally, and I believe that in a case of this kind some provision should be made for reimbursement.)

First, I think these snow surveys are terrific punishment to the men who make them. For me, a trip of 7 to 8 miles with a pack on my back and snow shoes, even under the best of conditions would be a physical hardship. I'm told that our trip was made under the worst possible conditions, and that these conditions would probably never be encountered again. This may be true, but I can't help thinking how much worse it would have been if we had encountered the wet snow on the way up instead of on the way out. I know, that for me, it would have been impossible to have made it.

Secondly, I think the element of danger and injury on these trips should be seriously considered and proper precautions taken to prevent them. However, this would be impossible without eliminating survey entirely. At any rate, if they are to be continued, necessary steps should be taken to minimize the possibility of injury, such as a sprained ankle or broken leg. An injury of this kind could have occurred very easily on many occasions during or travel. It seems to me that a hand axe of some type would be an absolute necessity in order to cut some wood and build a fire. Even this would be of little use if an injured man was left alone for he would be unable to use it. This would suggest then, three man parties so that one man could remain with the injured party and the other go for help. I hate to think of what would have happened if one of us had been injured half way between the lower and upper cabin in such a way that he could not walk. In freezing weather he would have faced certain death right there. This is, I suppose, looking at it from the extreme viewpoint, and something like it would only happen in a very isolated instance, but it can happen. Once it does, it's too late to do anything about it then.

I've gone to quite some length to relate the details of this trip, but hope that enough value can be derived from the report to justify its being written. -- **Stanley W. Dragnich**

Sterling Osborn's Description

We left Deer Lick about 9:00 o'clock Monday morning. There were snow slides along the hillside. The slides, mostly ice, would come down and groove out the canyon, leaving a film of ice all over the side of the canyon. We had traveled about three miles from the cabin, that would be about a mile west of Lightning creek gage and about one-quarter of a mile before reaching the top of the switchbacks.

I had been going across first all the time because I had solid heels on my shoes, and I could break the ice by stamping hard. Stanley said, "We're almost through now," and he didn't wait for me to go ahead. He started out first across the slide. In the previous slides I could break the ice by stamping with my heels. The ice was in a crust and the water had come down underneath and washed it all out, leaving about an inch of rotten snow, but it was pretty solid on top and very slick. I would go ahead and break the holes and he would come behind. He had on street shoes with galoshes over them. Of course with the big heels he couldn't break the ice, so I was going ahead all the time. He told me that we were almost over now, and he went on ahead. I put my snow shoes back on again because I thought we were about through.

He went up to the top of the hill, turned around and called back, "You might as well take them off again because there is another slide here." I walked up to where he was. He had his snowshoes off at that time, but I had put mine back on. There was no trouble walking without them there. It was just the slides that were slick. I got up to where he was, and was taking my snow shoes off, standing there on kind of a rock ledge. He didn't wait for me to go ahead, but started out. Then he called to me. I heard something rattling and looked up. Then I saw him disappear over this rock cliff. It was nearly 50 feet high. I had my snow shoes on and it was slick, so I couldn't get over close to the edge. I hurried and took my snowshoes off, then went over to the edge and I saw him still going down. He must have been about 300 feet down and traveling about 30 miles per hour. He was bounding and hitting about every 10 or 15 feet. He was sort of rolling and would hit on one side, and then he would bounce and hit on the other side. His snowshoes were sliding along behind

him, and his ski poles were dangling there too. He finally stopped, and he must have been 500 feet down the hillside. I called, but he didn't answer. He just lay there. I think he was knocked out.

I retraced my steps back down the side of the hill where we had come up, and then I went down around the slide and came down where he was. About half way down I called and I heard him answer. Then I knew he wasn't dead. I came around the corner and he was half lying and half sitting there on the ice, and was covered with blood. The blood was spurting out of his nose and mouth. His face was pretty badly cut, and blood might have been running down through his mouth. He was in a condition of shock. His teeth were chattering, and his hands were cold. I knew that I had to keep him warm, so I gave him all the clothes that I could spare, also put on his parka and his fur lined gloves. It was all ice there. There were big ice balls about two feet in diameter. That is what stopped him as he was coming down the hillside. I put him on my back and started out, but the snow was so deep, up to my waste in fact, that I would sink down and then get tangled up in the underbrush. It was just too much work. I knew that I couldn't do it and it was very painful for him. At least I got him warmed up and over that shocked condition. He helped himself along with his feet, being half on my back and half dragging with his feet. That started his circulation going and helping him out. I knew I couldn't get him out alone, so he said I should go for help. This was about 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

I started up to the trail. It was about 250 feet from where I had packed him. His bleeding had seemed to stop. I tried to break a trail up to the main trail, so that if he could stagger along a little bit he might work himself up to the trail. When I got on the trail I called back and told him I was on the trail, and told him to try to get up to it. Then I started for the logging camp. I had to cross about three of those slides on the way. I was very careful because I knew that if I went down one we would both be down there. I really took a lot of time crossing them. After I got over the slides and started down the switchback I left the trail and went over the mountainside, and it was pretty tough going because I would break through about every third step and sink down to my waist. The snow was deep, and I broke through to the underbrush. I couldn't wear my snowshoes because I had left them up on the hill. I couldn't have carried them over the slides because I needed both my hands to hang onto the brush. If I had my snowshoes I might have lost my hold and slid down.

I got down to the main logging road, and that is about a mile and a half or two miles from where the accident occurred. From there I started walking down the logging road to the carryall. There was quite a bit of snow on the road. It was little over my knees. I couldn't make very good time here. I got up to the carryall, but it wouldn't start as the battery had run down. I didn't waste any time here, but started out up the road as fast as I could go. About four miles further on I got up to the "Cat" shop where the logging outfit kept their caterpillars. They had two pickups there. The first one I went to didn't have any keys in it, but the second one did. I got it started and went three miles before it ran out of gas, I was about a mile and a half from camp then, and walked the rest of the way.

I arrived at the logging camp just as the 5:30 whistle blew for their dinner. All the men had just sat down to eat. I walked in, told them what had happened. And immediately eight men got up and went out to get the caterpillar. It had a snow blade on the front of it. They hooked the ambulance on behind and went down to the end of the road. They made fairly good time, but had to clear the road almost all the way. We had a stretcher because I thought we'd have to pack him out, also a first-aid kit, blankets and everything I thought we might need. We started up over the

trail and had to cut the ice around the slides because we knew we would have to come back through there. We thought maybe we would carry him, so we wanted a fairly good trail. We chopped the ice at the dangerous places and shoveled it out.

By the time we got to where we thought he was it was around 9:30 in the evening. We came to this place where I had left him, and I called but didn't hear a thing. I thought maybe he had gone to sleep. I started going down where I had left him. And then I heard him call up on the hillside. He was 50 feet above the trail, standing on a log. I didn't see how he was able to get up there. I asked him what he was doing, and he said he was looking for the trail. I told him he was 50 feet above the trail. We had to cut a trail through the slide that we went down, and then we went to get him. We had a strap that we put around his waste. With one man behind him and one in front, we took him across the slide and on down the trail. He walked because we couldn't carry him. All we cut in the ice there were foot holes, and it was dangerous. Every once in awhile he would start to faint and we would have to hold onto him to keep him from falling over. We would hold him up until he came around again. Then we would start again.

It was about 1:00 am when we got him down to the logging camp. At the camp they washed the blood off of him and bandaged him up a little more. They had put a bandage on his arm while up on the hillside to relieve the pain, as his shoulder was dislocated. He was at the logging camp about an hour, and then they went on down to Chilliwack with the ambulance. They had no chains for the ambulance, and the road was very slick. I had the carryall. They had started it on the way back by towing. I followed the ambulance down to the main highway – almost down to Hope. When I left down there it was around 5:30 am. The ambulance took him on down to the hospital, and I went back to the logging camp. I knew they would make it all right from there. They had to travel quite slowly due to the slick roads, probably arriving at Chilliwack around 7:00 am.

I got a trapper to go back with me to get the rest of the equipment scattered up the hill at the scene of the accident. First I tried to get someone at the logging camp to do it, but they all had jobs to do. No one wanted to go. I also asked the Seattle City Light man at the Witworth Ranch (observer for the Skagit River near Hope, BC gauging station), but he said he couldn't possibly do it. Then I arranged a trade with this trapper who lives about 25 miles from Hope, BC, whereby he would help me if I would bring out some of his supplies from Hope. We first went into town and got his load of supplies, then went to Lightning Creek. We couldn't reach the site of the accident until about dark, and I had to use a flashlight to find most of the equipment. The trapper stayed up on the trail while I collected the things. There were two pack sacks and snowshoes, ski poles, etc. Stan had been carrying the current meter, and I found it about half way down the hill. I looked everywhere for his expensive watch, though and couldn't find it. At several of the places where Stan had struck as he bounced down the hill there was blood spattered over a circle two or three feet in diameter.

Tuesday night, February 4, I stayed at the logging camp at the international boundary. The next day I drove to Tacoma.

At the Freezeout cabin where we stayed Thursday and Friday nights, the bear had damaged the stove so that it would not draw well. We were cold most of the time. Stan didn't bring enough clothes for such cold weather, and he was so tired out each night that he could eat but little and slept poorly. More than a foot of fresh snow fell while we were at Freezeout, and the trip out was worse than coming in, so that

Saturday night we were both exhausted and couldn't eat. We need an emergency shelter at Nightmare Camp, about half way between Deer Lick and Freezeout. It would be much better to have three men along to take turns breaking trail. --
Sterling R. Osborne

Note: (After conference with Mr. Hoffman of Seattle City Light, it was decided that the men making the Lightning Creek winter trip hereafter will be equipped with rope, ice axes and crampons. Also we will consider sending three men on the trip. We think Mr. Osborne is to be commended for his part in Dragnich's rescue --F.M.V.)

Submitted by:

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