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I. Situation in San Juan County

County Extension work was started in San Juan County in 1920 when the agent in Island County added this county to his program. Since that time 10 agricultural agents have been employed for periods of from 3 months to 6 years and 11 months. There were 4 periods each of a few months with no agent; none of these over 7 months. In addition 2 home demonstration agents have been employed for short periods. The economy of the county has been primarily agriculture with limestone quarrying and processing, and fishing as important commercial industries; a small amount of logging and lumbering has been practised at various times with most of the logging having been done since the beginning of the 2nd World War. In one of the histories of Washington published in 1885 the statement appears that "the San Juan Islands are destined to be covered with summer resorts;" this prediction has not yet been fully realized but there are over 30 resorts located in the county at the present time; the major portion of these are on Orcas Island but resorts and cabins for rent are also present on San Juan, Lopez, Shaw, Waldron and Decatur islands.

The agriculture of the county has gradually changed throughout the years with livestock, fruit production, grain, hay and seed production all being prominent at one time or another. In livestock, sheep raising and dairying have been important during most of the period; beef, swine, chickens and turkeys have also held a prominent part; rabbits were tried as a commercial enterprise but failed to show much profit and the escaped rabbits have become a menace to field crops and gardens on some of the islands. During periods of meat shortages due to rationing these escaped rabbits furnished a good side line income to some San Juan Island residents. Tree fruit production was a profitable business for several years till the Yakima and Wenatchee competition became too strong. Strawberries for fruit and plant production have been grown at various times. A try was made to enter the Loganberry field but this was short lived. Grain farming has been followed throughout. San Juan Island was the first place in the state to achieve importance in the canning of peas; this activity was driven out by the pea moth in 1937. Growing of peas, vetch and vegetable crops for seed production were also followed for several years. A small amount of alfalfa, clover and grass seed have been harvested at various times. The high freight rates have not been conducive

to entering the fresh vegetable field except for local consumption. In considering other potential agriculture crops interest has been shown in such things as blueberries, bulbs, ornamental shrubbery, mint, cranberries, lavender, golden seal, gingseng and holly; these have been either grown on a very small scale or not at all. Fur farming is followed by one party and game farming is a possibility.

Transportation is recognized as a more important item of the county economy than would be the case in most counties since in general good highways or railroad connections to market are an accepted thing; in this county all transportation is by ferry, boat or plane. Rates are correspondingly higher than for other sections of the state and times of departure and arrival are governed by the ferry schedules. This fact proves to be quite a stumbling block in arranging meetings of the people from different islands. On the credit side of the ledger the geographical isolation of the county does have an advantage in several lines of work; in livestock production, control of diseases and such pests as the ox warble should be easier to control by county wide effort than in other counties where the county border is an imaginary line or nothing harder to cross than a road or a river. Unfortunately, full advantage has not been taken of this isolation. Measures to restrict the entry of livestock without health certificates have been considered but no regulatory action has been taken. The relatively high freight rates make it desirable to produce crops valuable enough on a tonnage basis to effect the transportation charges.

No overall county planning group is in existence but the following organizations are available to work through: San Juan County Dairymen's Association, three subordinate and one Pomona Branch, three Soil Conservation districts, the county FMA, the county Health Department, Lopez Island Home Economics Club and several community and garden clubs. There are two veterans' classes in Institutional-on-the-Farm Training and the Lopez Smith-Hughes classes. A 4-H Leaders' Council was organized in 1948 to help coordinate the work with the 4-H clubs.