

## Coast Guard Helicopters

It is to be devoutly hoped that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors will follow up on the request of Sheriff William Pederson for permanent establishment of a U. S. Coast Guard helicopter base in this immediate area.

The public needs no further information on the valiant performances of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and private helicopter crews during our latest natural disaster, nor of their inestimable value to human life and welfare.

But it was several days before the main contingents arrived—the most critical days.

Three of those helicopters went down, two of them with heavy loss of life. Had the aircraft been on permanent station here, with their regular training missions during ordinary circumstances, they doubtless would have been familiar with the terrain and probably would not have run into trouble.

The Coast Guard helicopter which crashed at Rocky Point north of here may have mistaken the aircraft guide light atop the rock for an airport beacon. The one that went down in the Eel River near McCann struck a telephone wire which stretched across the river — a wire whose location probably would have been known by locally-trained pilots. It would not necessarily be known to fixed-wing fliers, who rarely fly at such low elevations. The third aircraft also struck a wire.

There are several likely locations for a permanent helicopter base here, including the old Navy blimp base near the Humboldt Bay Coast Guard installation at Fairhaven—already surfaced and with tie-down anchorages. The old hangar is dilapidated, but few ones need not be prohibitively expensive.

There is the huge and fully-equipped installation at McKinleyville with its permanent Federal Aviation Agency control tower, and there is the relatively fog-free airport at Rohnerville, which operated during the recent emergency when others had zero-zero visibility.

A helicopter base also would be invaluable in sea rescues off our local coast, for—acknowledging fully the prompt and excellent work of surface craft of the Coast Guard through many years—boats and ships cannot reach the scene of disaster as fast as aircraft can. And many a rescue at sea has been effected by helicopters.

Certainly these machines would not eliminate the need for the cutters and lifeboats of the Coast Guard, for there are many missions in which the aircraft could be of little avail other than spotting.

Any substantial economic benefit to the county through establishment of a permanent base here would, of course, depend upon its size and the number of personnel, but the economic aspect is of the smallest regard.

What is important is the immediate availability of the helicopters in time of distress.

The Humboldt Standard believes that not only the Board of Supervisors, but all governmental and quasi-governmental agencies should strongly support the efforts of Sheriff Pederson to secure such a permanent installation in the Humboldt Bay area.

## Loggers Sue On Recovery In Del Norte

Five Del Norte county logging contractors have filed a petition for a writ of mandamus against Del Norte Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff's Department to halt the county's sale of uncut driftwood logs and other merchantable forest products which have washed up on the plaintiffs' respective properties, or which are about to do so.

A complaint for injunction was filed as an alternative.

The writ, signed by Judge M. H. Messner in Superior Court, demands that the defendants issue permits to the plaintiffs for recovery of the materials or show cause why they should not do so.

Both will be heard in court today.

The plaintiffs are listed as Darrell Salsbury, James Moe, James Thuney, Ray W. Streubling and James Archibald. The actions were filed by the law firm of Dusenbury, Martin, Bealy and Parks of Portland, Oregon.

The complaint asserts that an emergency ordinance adopted by the Board, whose members are named individually along with Sheriff Oswald Hovgaard as defendants, prohibits them from removing any of the trees without written permission from the sheriff.

### Claimed Illegal

The plaintiffs charge that the ordinance is illegal in that it conflicts with Admiralty Law in the field of rightful salvage, that it is vague and interferes with property rights and lawful pursuit of business, attempts to delegate authority to the sheriff without having established any standard of procedure, and that it is discriminatory against the owners of the land.

The petition also asserts that the time of marketability of the trees and other forest products is limited due to the physical and economic effects prevailing in the county as a direct result of the flood.

Unless the defendants are restrained from attempting to enforce the ordinance, the plaintiffs will suffer irreparable loss, the petition asserts.