

Indian Rock Dam Would Have Held

By DEAN R. WISE
Of The Daily Record

Could York's Indian Rock Dam on Codorus Creek have stood up to rains similar to those that washed out the Laurel Dam at Johnstown at midweek, wreaking death and destruction upon the southwestern Cambria County city?

"Absolutely, there's not a question in my mind that it would have," answered a confident Bill Kirkpatrick, head dam operator, who verified his sentiments by researching the dam's performance records of the two worst rainstorms of the past five years.

A spokesman at the Baltimore District office of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed that Indian Rock Dam functioned flawlessly in the aftermath of tropical storms Agnes in June 1972 and Eloise in September 1975.

However, the Baltimore spokesman for the corps said it was unfair to compare the ill-fated Johnstown dam with the York project because "they are two different types of design and construction built for two distinct and separate purposes."

Johnstown's Laurel Dam is a water supply dam of gravity-earth construction with only a section of concrete and is not a corps project. Indian Rock Dam is a total concrete facility built in the early 1940's for flood control purposes and features the 461-foot long spillway that serves as a safety valve in case of unrelenting, torrential rains.

Kirkpatrick said Indian Rock Dam withstood rains greater than those of Johnstown in both the Agnes and Eloise storms and, on at least of dozen prior occasions, had placed under gate operations for lesser high water condi-

tions.

Indian Rock was utilized to 100 percent capacity during Agnes when the runoff from the 94 square mile drainage area filled the impounding acreage and sent flood waters down the spillway into the creek's South branch. The spillway is 18 feet below the top of the 83 feet high dam breast.

During Eloise, the York dam reached 68 percent of capacity with the water level cresting seven feet below the spillway.

Kirkpatrick said rainfall at the dam during Agnes was measured at 13.40 inches during a 24-hour period June 21-22 while the Eloise storm stretched over a five-day period, precipitating 13.28 inches of rain between Sept. 23 and 27, over half of which fell within a 24-hour period Sept. 25-26.

Indian Rock Dam would have held - 1977



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