

Decision No. 13374

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CITY OF BLYTHE, a municipal corporation,

Complainant,

vs.

THE SOUTHERN SIERRAS POWER COMPANY,

Defendant.

ORIGINAL

Case 1948.

Allen H. Barber, City Attorney,
for the City of Blythe, Complainant.

E. B. Criddle, for Defendant.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

This is a complaint of the City of Blythe regarding the poor quality of electric service supplied by The Southern Sierras Power Company in that City. The complaint alleges that the electric generating plant of the defendant is inadequate and unreliable, that service has been interrupted on many occasions and that defendant has failed to serve certain of the inhabitants of the City.

Shortly after the filing of the complaint, an investigation of the entire situation was made by one of the Commission's engineers, and at the hearing held in Blythe before Examiner Williams on January 24, 1924, his report was introduced in evidence, together with the testimony of representatives of The Southern Sierras Power Company and of the City of Blythe. Since this hearing, the defendant has made a complete investigation of the possibilities of future business in Blythe and has submitted a report which, it was stipulated at the hearing, is also to be considered in evidence.

In the opinion of The Southern Sierras Power Company the load at Blythe is not sufficient to justify the construction of

the long transmission line which would be necessary to connect it with the main transmission system of the Company, and service is therefore supplied from a local generating plant operated by oil engines. The evidence shows that, during the year 1923, considerable difficulty was experienced in the operation of this plant, and as a result there were many irregularities in the service supplied. These difficulties culminated shortly before the filing of the complaint with the break-down of both engines at the same time and a period of over a week during which no service was supplied.

In the opinion of the Commission's engineer, the plant is inadequate in capacity and had not been kept in proper operating condition. Representatives of The Southern Sierras Power Company admit that the plant has not been in as good condition as it should have been, but point to a consistent improvement in the operating record from 1920 until early in 1923, and state that the true condition of the plant was not known to the management of the Company, who believed from the operating results that the plant was being properly maintained.

The Company has agreed to the installation of an additional engine and generating unit of a size to be determined by the Commission, and the existing machinery has already been thoroughly overhauled. Its investigation into the prospects of future business confirms the conclusion of our engineer that the new unit should be of not less than 150 KVA capacity.

In answer to the allegation that proper extensions of service have not been made, the Company offers to make at the present time all extensions which should be made under its rules as filed with the Commission, and it is partly in this connection that the investigation of prospective business has been made. The making of such extensions depends upon the individual circumstances in each

case, as well as upon the conditions in the town as a whole. In view of this and of the Company's attitude, the Order now made will not cover the matter of extensions. Should this phase of the complaint not be satisfactorily settled, however, the City of Blythe need only bring the matter to the attention of the Commission, and the case will be reopened for such further Order as is necessary.

O R D E R

City of Blythe having complained to the Railroad Commission, regarding the electric service of The Southern Sierras Power Company, a public hearing having been held and the matter being submitted and now ready for decision,

THE RAILROAD COMMISSION HEREBY FINDS AS A FACT that the present electric generating plant of The Southern Sierras Power Company in the City of Blythe is inadequate properly to meet the requirements of its consumers in that City.

Basing its Order on the foregoing finding of fact and on the findings of fact in the Opinion preceding this Order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that

(1) Before August 1, 1924, The Southern Sierras Power Company shall install in its electric generating plant in the City of Blythe an additional electric generator of at least 150 KVA capacity, together with a proper and adequate prime mover, and accessory and auxiliary equipment.

(2) Before May 1, 1924, The Southern Sierras Power Company shall complete the repair and improvement of the present equipment in the aforesaid generating plant substantially in accordance with the recommendations set forth in a report filed in this proceeding

and designated "Railroad Commission Exhibit 1."

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 5th day
of April, 1924.

C. Seaver
H. V. Brundage
Dwight Martin
Egerton Shore
J. W. Whitney
Commissioners.