

Decision No. 14180.

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

C. L. GREEN, et al.,  
Complainants,  
vs.  
INDIO WATER COMPANY,  
J. L. Marshall, Manager,  
Defendant.

ORIGINAL

Case No. 1994.

C. L. Green, for complainants.  
J. L. Marshall, for defendant.  
Thomas C. Yager, for P. L. Everett.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

The above entitled proceeding is a complaint brought by approximately 35 residents of the town of Indio, Riverside County, who allege that due to interruptions in the service of electric power furnished to the town of Indio, the defendant herein has been unable on numerous occasions to operate its pumping equipment, with the result that consumers have frequently been entirely without water service. The Commission is asked to compel defendant to install auxiliary power at its pumping plant so that adequate service may be furnished at all times.

A public hearing in this proceeding was held at Indio before Examiner Williams on July 11, 1924, at which time complainants testified that interruptions in the service of electric power had been numerous, causing the water company to shut down

its pumping equipment, with the result that the inhabitants of the town were entirely deprived of water service. J. L. Marshall, owner of the water system, testified that he had installed a Ford gasoline engine connected to a centrifugal pump in order to furnish the auxiliary pumping equipment demanded by the complainants. As this equipment had not been tested sufficiently to indicate its adaptability to the purposes for which it was installed, the matter was set down for further hearing on October 3, 1924.

At this later hearing testimony of the complainants was to the effect that the auxiliary pumping plant installed by the utility had not demonstrated its ability to furnish the service for which it was designed.

This water system consists of a 12 inch well 328 feet deep, from which water is elevated to a 10,000 gallon capacity storage tank on a 23 foot wooden tower by means of a Layne-Bowler pump direct-connected to a 15 horse-power electric motor, which is automatically controlled. Water is distributed to approximately 180 consumers, of whom 40 are served through meters, the remainder being charged on a flat rate basis.

Data contained in the annual reports of the utility filed with the Commission were offered in evidence, and the figures presented indicate that the net earnings available for return upon the investment during the past three years have been sufficient to average only 4.2 per cent., and that subsequent to the filing of the last annual report the capital invested has been increased by the purchase of the auxiliary pumping equipment previously described. An analysis of the total maintenance and operation expense, including depreciation, indicates that 81 per cent. of the total was for pumping expense. While service to

consumers would undoubtedly be improved if the system were entirely metered, and some reduction in operating expenses might also result, Mr. Marshall states that he cannot at this time complete the metering of the system as no funds are available or can be obtained for this purpose.

The local superintendent of the Southern Sierras Power Company testified regarding the character of the power service supplied to the town of Indio and vicinity. Subsequent to December, 1923, many of the interruptions in the electric service were of such short duration as not to affect the operation of the water system in any way. On August 19, 1924, there was placed in operation a second power transmission line, which enables the company to deliver electric energy to this vicinity from two different sources. The testimony also indicates that subsequent to the inauguration of service over this second power line there has been only one interruption of service of more than six minutes' duration, and that additional improvements are to be made in the immediate future which, it is reasonable to expect, will result in fewer interruptions than have occurred in the past.

It is evident that the auxiliary pumping equipment installed by the owner of the water system cannot supply the full demands for water which are made upon the system, especially during the summer months. For this reason it will be necessary for consumers to limit the use of water to absolute necessities when the auxiliary plant is forced to operate. On the other hand the utility should maintain the auxiliary pumping equipment in the best possible order so that it may be placed in operation at a moment's notice.

As a result of the testimony presented at the hearing the Commission is convinced that the installation of auxiliary pumping equipment sufficient to supply at all times the maximum

demands of consumers would require an unreasonable expenditure on behalf of defendant, and that the revenues received from the sale of water are not sufficient to warrant such an expenditure. With the improved electric power service and the auxiliary pumping equipment now installed, it is evident that consumers will receive adequate service.

O R D E R

Formal complaint having been made to the Commission as entitled above, public hearings having been held thereon, the matter having been submitted, and the Commission being now fully informed in the premises,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED for the reasons set out in the preceding opinion that the above proceeding be and the same is hereby dismissed.

The effective date of this order is hereby fixed as November first, 1924.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1924.

OS Seaver  
H. R. Dunning  
J. Irving Martin

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Commissioners.