

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
Mt. Lassen Transit Company, a corpor-)
ation, for permission to reroute a) Application No. 12665.
portion of its operations between)
Chico, California, and Westwood and)
Susanville, California.)

Harry A. Encell and Jas. A. Miller, by
Harry A. Encell, for applicant,

Allison Ware for M. Bernardo, and Chico Chamber
of Commerce, Protestants.

BY THE COMMISSION -

O P I N I O N

Mt. Lassen Transit Company, a corporation, has petitioned the Railroad Commission for an order authorizing the rerouting of a portion of its lines between Chico and Westwood, operation being now conducted over the Humboldt Road from Chico, thence via Forest Ranch, Berdens, West Branch, Lomo, Butte Meadows, Jonesville and Chester, and it being proposed to operate from Chico via the state highway to Red Bluff and thence via the state highway from Red Bluff to Westwood and Susanville .

A public hearing on this application was conducted by Examiner Handford at Chico, the matter was duly submitted and is now ready for decision.

Applicant alleges, in support of its request for the authority herein sought, that the present route via the Humboldt Road is closed for a period of practically seven months of each year, whereas the proposed highway is operative for a period of approximately nine months of each year; that the improved highways over which rerouting is proposed, although the distance is approximately forty miles greater, will require no greater time to traverse by reason of the operation being over improved roads instead of the rough, mountainous and unimproved Humboldt Road via Butte Meadows and

Jonesville; that applicant proposes to establish a local service between Chico and Jonesville serving the communities at Forest Ranch, Berdans, West Branch, Lomo and Butte Meadows; that applicant proposes to charge the same rates via the proposed rerouting as are now effective from Chico via the Humboldt Road route; and that ^{by} the granting of the application the public will receive a more comfortable and adequate service which applicant can render at less cost and without any interference with the present service of other authorized carriers.

Mr. Frank E. Graham, Secretary-Manager of applicant corporation, testified regarding the operating conditions between Westwood and Chico, via the Humboldt Road; that on such road east of the summit between Jonesville and Chester there were but one or two ranches in a distance of 22 miles; that the Humboldt Road route was open to travel approximately six months of each year; and that if the rerouting was authorized service could be given on the Red Bluff-Westwood highway for about nine months of each year. This witness further testified that it was the intention of his company to operate a daily service via Red Bluff and over the Red Bluff-Westwood highway during all the portions of the year that the road was open for travel and that approximately one hour longer would be consumed in making the trip between Chico and Westwood via Red Bluff than via the Humboldt Road. Witness further stated that the Humboldt Road was a steep and winding mountainous road with high centers and that the smaller type of stages seating 16 passengers were then used whereas larger equipment, seating 18 or 20 passengers, could be used on the proposed Red Bluff route.

It further appears from the testimony of this witness that the Humboldt Road for a distance of 14 miles from Chico is in good

condition but that from Jonesville easterly over the summit towards Chester, a distance of 22 miles, the road conditions are bad and the population negligible. The distance from Chico to Chester is 65 miles.

The granting of the application is protested by the Chico Chamber of Commerce and by M. Bernardo, the latter operating a stage service between Chico and Red Bluff.

Dr. D. B. Copeland, a director of the Chico Chamber of Commerce, testified that he owned property at Jonesville, and that the Chico Chamber of Commerce objected to the granting of the rerouting on the basis that business properly tributary to Chico merchants would be diverted.

Mr. H. H. Hume, County Road Engineer of Butte County, testified that the portion of Humboldt Road in Butte County had been under a program of reconstruction, the work still being in progress.

Mr. Frank Roehr, a supervisor of Butte County, testified that the portion of Humboldt Road in Butte County was a good road into the mountains and served as a method of access to the mountain territory from the most populous section of such county.

Five residents of Chico testified that they had summer homes at Chester and that they utilized the service of the applicant for the transportation of express packages and supplies, and at times for their own transportation. It appears from the testimony of these witnesses that Chester has a population during the summer vacation /months of about 500, over half of which number are residents of Chico and the northerly portion of Butte County.

Three merchants of Chico testified as to the business given the applicant's line between Chico and Chester in the transportation of automobile supplies and parts, cigars, tobacco, candies and bakery products. The greater volume of these shipments move to points between Chico and Jonesville, although some shipments go beyond the summit to the vacation territory in and around Chester.

Mr. M. Bernardo, operating a stage service between Chico and Red Bluff, testified that he operated three round trips daily in the carriage of passengers, baggage and express, and also operated a freight service; that he is in position to furnish all necessary service between Chico and Red Bluff, either as to local service or for passengers and express originating at or destined to points east of Red Bluff in the territory now served by applicant; and that in the furnishing of such service he is willing to participate in through rates and, if necessary, to establish additional schedules.

Two witnesses, residents of Los Molinos, testified regarding the satisfactory service rendered by protestant, Bernardo, in his operation between Chico and Red Bluff, and an endorsement signed by 17 residents of Los Molinos commending the Bernardo service was filed as an exhibit.

We have given careful consideration to the evidence presented in this proceeding. It appears that the proposal of the applicant contemplates the establishment of service by the use of the highway between Chico and Red Bluff and thence via the Red Bluff-Westwood highway in lieu of the present seasonal service between Chico and Westwood via the Humboldt Road with connection with the Red Bluff-Westwood highway at Chester. The proposed rerouting would result in the service being available for possibly sixty to ninety days longer each year than via the present Humboldt Road route. Applicant does not propose to handle any local business between Chico and Red Bluff, nor to charge any additional fare to Chester or points east thereof. Protestant, Bernardo, is in position to furnish all service between Chico and Red Bluff which may be offered and in view of the absence of any complaint against his service or facilities and of the endorsement of his operation here in evidence he should be permitted the continuance of his service and such additional patronage as may accrue to him from passengers desiring to travel from Chico via Red Bluff to points on the line of applicant between Chester and points east thereof.

It appears that the greatest need for the service of the applicant between Chico and Westwood, via the Humboldt Road, is the seasonal operation between Chico and Jonesville. This operation serves the summer and vacation business at the intermediate points of Forest Ranch, Berdams, West Branch, Lomo and Butte Meadows, and such intermediate communities have no public transportation service other than that furnished by the applicant during the portion of the year that the Humboldt Road is open to public travel. The record shows that the Humboldt Road is being kept in reasonable operative condition insofar as such road is located in Butte County. Over the portion of the road between Jonesville and Chester, a distance of approximately 24 miles practically all in Plumas County, the road is not in condition for the economical operation of stages and the country is sparsely settled, producing little or no traffic, and it does not appear that there is any immediate prospect of improvement in the condition of the Humboldt Road in Plumas County.

We are of the opinion that the service between Chico and Jonesville should be continued, that a temporary suspension of operation should be permitted between Jonesville and Chester, and that the application for rerouting via Red Bluff should be denied. The order herein will so provide.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held in the above entitled proceeding, the matter having been duly submitted and the Commission being fully advised,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that MC. Lassen Transit Company, a corporation, be and the same hereby is authorized to discontinue the seasonal operation between Jonesville and Chester until the further order or direction of this Commission, said operation forming a portion of the route heretofore operated by applicant between Chico and Westwood via Humboldt Road from Chico to Chester.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that this application, insofar as it requests authority for rerouting of service from Chico to points east of Chester via Red Bluff and the Red Bluff-Westwood highway be and the same hereby is denied.

The effective date of this order is hereby fixed as ten (10) days from the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 19th day of July, 1926.

H. B. Burdige

C. L. Seavey

F. W. Wright

_____ COMMISSIONERS.