

Decision No. 21903

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the matter of the application)
of NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD)
COMPANY for authority to close)
agency at Monte Rio, County of)
Sonoma, California.)

Application No. 16025.

H. W. Hobbs, for Northwestern Pacific
Railroad Company.
Emmett I. Donahue, for Protestant
Shippers.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In this proceeding Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company requests permission to discontinue its station agent at Monte Rio on its Guerneville Branch in Sonoma County, between September 15th and June 15th of each year. At the hearing of this matter the application was amended to fix the period from September 15th to May 15th.

A public hearing herein was conducted by Examiner Williams at Santa Rosa.

Monte Rio is a station on the Guerneville Branch of applicant, and it is 3.3 miles north (railroad direction) of Guerneville, and 4.3 miles south of Duncan Mills. The abandonment of service for eight months of the year is urged on the ground that the volume of business at the Monte Rio station is not sufficient to justify its continuance during these eight months, particularly in the winter period. The business at the Monte Rio station during the twelve months' period ending June 30, 1929, as shown by the application, is as follows:

Revenue from passenger tickets sold,	\$2,797.00
Carload freight forwarded and received,	1,849.17
L.C.L. freight forwarded and received,	1,781.67
Cost of maintaining agency,	2,398.58

An analysis of exhibits filed by the applicant shows that between September 15, 1928, and May 15, 1929, the gross revenue from L. C. L. freight amounted to approximately \$826.00 and the expense of maintaining the agency was approximately \$1,599.00, or, in other words, the station expense exceeded the L.C.L. revenue by \$773.00. From May 15th to September 15th the receipts were \$955.67, and the station expenses \$799.58, or an excess of \$156.09. This record shows that the bulk of the business at the station is during the four months when applicant proposes to maintain an agency.

The granting of this application was opposed by many residents of Monte Rio on the ground that an agent is required for the care of L.C.L. shipments during the winter period and for the handling of traffic, especially for some school children attending school at Guerneville and Santa Rosa. The protestants contended that the removal of the agent will result in delay of receiving their L.C.L. shipments and also require that such shipments be prepaid during eight months in the year. While the testimony of these witnesses indicates some inconvenience might result because of the absence of an agent, we believe that the applicant's offer to maintain a caretaker who will look after the L.C.L. shipments and deliver them to the consignees from storage at the station will greatly relieve the inconvenience. The passenger business may be easily attended to by the train conductors and L.C.L. freight can be cared for by a caretaker

during the winter season. The period selected by applicant for the maintenance of full agency benefits seems to be reasonable under the conditions, particularly when consideration is given to the proximity of the adjacent agency stations. The record shows that Railway Express Agency, which is not seeking to abandon its agency, has made arrangements with a resident of Monte Rio to handle its business.

After carefully considering the record herein, it appears reasonable to grant applicant's request to withdraw its agency at Monte Rio for the period from September 15th to May 15th each year, and the application accordingly will be granted.

O R D E R

Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company having made application to abandon its agent at the station of Monte Rio, Sonoma County, from September 15th to May 15th each year, public hearings having been held, the matter being under submission and ready for decision, therefore

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that permission and authority be and it is hereby granted to Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company, a corporation, to abandon its agency at the station of Monte Rio, located on its Guerneville Branch in the County of Sonoma, from September 15th to May 15th, each year, subject, however, to the following conditions:

(1) Applicant shall continue to maintain an agent at said station of Monte Rio from May 15th to September 15th, each year.

(2) Applicant shall continue the maintenance of said station as a non-agency between September 15th and May 15th, each year.

(3) Applicant shall store L.C.L. shipments in the station building under lock and key and shall appoint a custodian of the key at said station for the purpose of caring for L.C.L. freight during the period from September 15th to May 15th each year, and at such times as necessary custodian shall maintain a fire in the waiting room for the comfort of passengers for a reasonable time prior to the departure of passenger trains.

(4) Applicant shall post notices at said station, notifying the public of the removal of said agent, for at least ten (10) days before each time the agent is removed.

(5) The Commission reserves the right to make such further orders as it may deem right and proper and to revoke its permission if, in its judgment, the public convenience and necessity demand such action.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty (20) days from the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 16th day of December, 1929.

John S. Lundy

Clarence

Frank

John

Adl J. Linn

Commissioners.