

Decision No. 21904.

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
Cazadero, Sonoma County, California,
during the period September 1st to
May 31st, inclusive, of each year.

Application No. 16026

In the Matter of the Application of
the RAILWAY EXPRESS AGENCY for author-
ity to abandon its agency at Cazadero,
County of Sonoma, State of California.

Application No. 16083.

H. W. Hobbs, for Applicant, Northwestern
Pacific Railroad Company.

Edward Stern, for Applicant, Railway Ex-
press Agency.

Emmett I. Donahue, for Protestant Shippers.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In Application No. 16026, Northwestern Pacific Rail-
road Company requests permission to remove for part of each
year the station agent at the station of Cazadero on its Guerne-
ville Branch in Sonoma County, and in Application No. 16083,
Railway Express Agency asks permission to abandon its agency at
Cazadero for a like period.

A public hearing herein was conducted by Examiner
Williams at Santa Rosa, at which time the applications were con-
solidated for hearing and decision.

Cazadero is a station at the terminus of the Guerne-
ville Branch of applicant and is 7.2 miles distant from Duncan
Mills, an agency station. The passenger and freight service to

this point is provided by a passenger train daily and a freight train six days a week between Duncan Mills and Cazadero. Applicant seeks discontinuance of the agency on the ground that the business conducted at said station does not justify the expense of its maintenance. According to its Exhibit No. 3 filed at the hearing, its revenue from L.C.L. freight during the twelve months' ending June 30, 1929, was \$1,653.65. Its passenger revenue for the same period amounted to \$798.00, as shown on Exhibit No. 5. During the same period, 57 carloads were received and dispatched with accruing revenue of \$3,415.00. Exhibit No. 5 for June, July and August, 1929, shows about the same proportion of carload business. In gross, the business for the year ending June 30, 1929 was:

Passenger tickets sold,	\$798.00
Carloads freight forwarded and received,	3,415.00
Freight L.C.L. forwarded and received,	1,653.00
Expense of maintaining agency,	1,536.55

Applicant, Northwestern Pacific, proposes, in the event this application is granted, to establish a non-agency station in charge of a caretaker to care for L.C.L. freight, or to absorb cost of railroad business messages made over the local telephone between Cazadero and Duncan Mills station, there being no conversation line between the points on the railroad wires. Passenger tickets are proposed to be handled by the train conductor on the trains. The company also proposes to establish a locked room at the station where L.C.L. shipments may be consigned, to be called for by consignees.

In Application No. 15344 applicant proposed abandonment of the station throughout the entire year. This application was denied by Decision No. 21112 because there was a showing that a station agency is necessary, at least during the summer season

when the resorts are open. In the present application authority is sought to abandon the station agency only from October 1st to June 1st.

At the hearing applicant amended the application, asking that the agency be abandoned from September 15th to May 15th, each year, on the ground that during eight months of the year an agent's service is not required. An analysis of the exhibit shows that during the eight months, from September 15th to May 15th, applicant's revenue from L.C.L. freight amounted to approximately \$868.00, while the agency cost is approximately \$1,034.00, or a loss of \$167.00 during the period over the gross receipts from the L.C.L. business, but the four months between May 15th and September 15th, the same analysis shows receipts of \$785.65, and expense of \$502.55, or an excess of receipts over expenses of \$283.10 for the entire four months, which tends to show the lack of necessity for the presence of an agent at the station during eight months of the year.

The abandonment, as proposed, met with some opposition by citizens of Cazadero, who took the position that the station is the terminus of the Guerneville Branch, and is the only railroad available for many miles to the north and west; that an agency is necessary for the prompt delivery of L.C.L. freight and that the absence of an agent would cause considerable inconvenience to the consignees; also, that the arrival and departure of the freight trains are irregular, sometimes being several hours in variation, and that the consignees would be required to wait in uncertainty as to whether the shipments were to be received or not.

It appears from a consideration of the testimony of all the witnesses produced that the absence of a station agent during the summer season would be a distinct disadvantage, but applicant is not seeking to abandon its agency for this period,

and we believe the period selected by it is of ample duration for the active season in this district. The winter business is mostly carload shipments, in so far as sustained revenue is concerned, when such shipments do not need the attention of an agent, as cars can be ordered by telephone at Duncan Mills station, or orders for cars left in the waybill box at Cazadero. The great bulk of business that this station is doing is during the summer period, and we are convinced from the record that applicant should be permitted to operate the station as a non-agency station during the period selected.

Railway Express Agency, through exhibits filed, shows that its revenue per shipment during 1928 was \$.7868 and cost \$.0826, and in 1929 its revenue was \$.7706 and its cost per shipment \$.0764. During the summer period more than one-half (1307) of 2498 shipments in 1928 were received at the station. This proportion was not maintained during 1929 (nine months), the shipments being much less in number. The average receipts for 1928 were \$206.40. The average per month in 1928 was \$17.20, and in 1929, \$13.45, which is approximately 10 per cent for the gross monthly business. The station agent is the express agent and will, of course, perform all express and telegraph service during the four months selected for the agency operations.

During the time no agent is at Cazadero, Railway Express Agency will continue to deliver and receive express shipments through its train messenger at car door.

Applicant, through the testimony of R. S. Elliott, its Route Agent, testified that an effort had been made to obtain an express agent in Cazadero on the commission basis, but none could be found. Because of a similar situation to the L.C.L. business of Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company, we believe the

application of the Railway Express Agency should also be granted.

O R D E R

Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company having made application to abandon its agency at Cazadero, Sonoma County, (Application No. 16026), and the Railway Express Agency having made like application (Application No. 16083), public hearings having been held, the Commission being apprised of the facts, 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 to abandon its agency at the station of Cazadero, on its Guerneville Branch, in the County of Sonoma, between September 15th and May 15th, each year, subject however to the following conditions:

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

(2) Applicant shall continue the maintenance of said station as a non-agency station 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 time as necessary custodian shall maintain fire in the waiting room for a reasonable time prior to the departure of passenger trains for the comfort of waiting passengers.

(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.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that Railway Express Agency be and it is hereby authorized to abandon its agency at Cazadero, County of Sonoma, between September 15th and May 15th, each year, subject however to the following conditions:

(1) Applicant shall require its train messenger to receive express matter at car door and discharge prepaid express matter at said Cazadero station.

(2) Applicant shall continue to maintain an agency at said Cazadero station between May 15th and September 15th, each year.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that 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.

David L. Houtch
W. L. Lewis
Wm. B. Smith
Leon Whidell
M. J. Carr
 Commissioners.