

Decision No. 23178

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of WEST COAST TELEPHONE COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA for authority to abandon telephone line from Prather Ranch to Montague, California, and to discontinue toll stations connected thereon.

Application No. 16987

ORIGINAL

In the Matter of the Application of WEST COAST TELEPHONE COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA for authority to abandon telephone line from Ager, California, to Dorris, California, and to discontinue telephone stations connected thereon.

Application No. 16988

E. R. Hannibal, for Applicant.

Joseph Hessig, for Certain Subscribers.

F. D. Douthitt, for United States Forest Service, Interested Party.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In the above numbered applications, as amended, West Coast Telephone Company seeks to abandon two farmer telephone lines owned by it - one between Ager and Dorris, and the other between Prather Ranch and Montague.

Public hearings thereon were conducted by Examiner Williams at Yreka, at which time the applications were consolidated for hearing and decision, and were duly submitted.

According to the testimony, these lines were acquired by applicant in connection with the purchase of the Dorris exchange

properties, authorized by Decision No. 20683 on Application No. 15032, dated January 17, 1929. Although connected with the switchboards of applicant, the lines have been of little service except when repairs were made by two or three subscribers, who used the lines for local communication. The company made few repairs (costing less than \$100.00) and received no revenue, according to the testimony of A. W. Denio, Manager for applicant at Dorris. The reason for this was that applicant received the lines from its predecessor in collapsed condition for many miles, and received no demands for service.

The line between Ager and Dorris was built between Ager and Klamath Hot Springs in 1890 and completed to Dorris in 1900. It is approximately 24 miles long. The construction was grounded iron circuit, suspended mostly on forest trees, only about ten per cent of the suspension being on poles. Joseph Hessig testified that the line has been in a state of partial collapse for many years, and that long distance use has been impossible. Mr. Denio testified that putting the line in efficient condition would cost approximately \$5,000.00, and that as it passes through mountain territory it would be subject to excessive storm maintenance. Prospective revenue would not support such expenditures. Salvage would not pay its own cost, he testified. It is the purpose of applicant to give these lines (which are not now included in its rate base) to four subscribers, who intend to reconstruct portions for their mutual private use.

The line between Montague and Prather Ranch was constructed in 1894, and is a grounded iron circuit. By amendment filed at the hearing, applicant sought to abandon that portion of the line

between a point three miles east of Prather Ranch and MacDoel, thus abandoning the entire line. Exhibit No. 2, filed at the hearing, is the acceptance of the line named in the amendment by the MacDoel Telephone Company, J. D. Hammond, Manager, to be assimilated into that system. Also, F. D. Douthitt, United States Forest Supervisor, at Yreka, stated that this service would take over all the remaining line, except three miles between Prather Ranch and the point where the MacDoel Company will terminate and connect with the Yreka exchange for Forest Service use.

No one appeared to protest the abandonments proposed. Only those interested in receiving the abandoned property for their own use did appear. In explaining why the lines are sought to be discontinued, applicant presented the following valuations:

	<u>Ager</u>	<u>Prather</u>
Reproduction cost, new,	\$10,175.00	\$7,881.00
Less Depreciation,	<u>9,498.00</u>	<u>6,979.00</u>
Salvage value,	\$ 677.00	\$ 902.00

Applicant also amended its application (paragraph No. 3) to substitute "Bogus to Fall Creek" instead of Ager and changing the connecting point of McKenzie to Fall Creek instead of Ager.

The record also shows that the lines sought to be abandoned have fallen into disuse because nearly all the subscribers have other and efficient means of reaching the exchanges at Dorris and Yreka. Many of the places are served by The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company or by farmer lines connected with that company's system. It appears that, except for the three miles east of Prather Ranch, all subscribers may obtain service, and in most cases have already obtained it, over other facilities. The lines to be abandoned, even if rebuilt, would not receive patronage

enough to pay the out-of-pocket cost of service and maintenance.

In view of these facts, we believe authority should be granted applicant to abandon these lines and withdraw from service in the two areas. That applicant is giving this abandoned property to those who can make private use of it for a nominal consideration is not a matter that concerns this Commission after abandonment is effected.

ORDER

West Coast Telephone Company, having made applications to the Railroad Commission for orders authorizing the abandonment of certain telephone lines, more particularly described in the opinion which precedes this order, public hearings thereon having been held and the matter now being ready for decision,

The Railroad Commission of the State of California hereby finds as a fact that applicant should not be required to continue operation of the aforesaid lines.

Basing its order upon the foregoing finding of fact and upon such other findings of fact as are contained in the opinion preceding this order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that West Coast Telephone Company be and it is hereby authorized to abandon the aforesaid lines, and to cancel and withdraw as of the date of abandonment, all rates and tariffs for communication service over said lines.

The authorization herein granted for abandonment of the aforesaid properties shall become effective fifteen (15)

days after the date hereof, and is conditional upon completion on or before February 1, 1931.

For all other purposes the effective date of this order shall be twenty (20) days from and after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 13th day of December, 1930.

C. A. ...

Leon ...

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M. A. ...

Commissioners.