

Decision No. 25540

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ORIGINAL

In the Matter of the Application of
 (a) SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY for an
 order authorizing it to close the
 agency at Richvale, County of Butte,
 State of California, and (b) RAILWAY
 EXPRESS AGENCY, INC. for an order au-
 thorizing it to abandon its agency
 at said station.

)
)
) Application
) No. 18401.
)

- E. W. Hobbs for Applicants,
- Glenn Harris for Butte County Farm
 Bureau, Protestant,
- J. J. Deuel for California Farm
 Bureau Federation, Protestant,
- A. J. Lofgren for Butte County Rice
 Growers and Rice Growers Associ-
 ation of California, Protestants,
- Lewis F. Carlton for Richvale Farm
 Center, Protestant,
- B. C. Lewis, Vice President, Order of
 Railway Telegraphers, Interested Party.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

Southern Pacific Company and Railway Express Agency, Inc. herein petition the Railroad Commission for an order granting authority for the closing of their station at Richvale, County of Butte, California.

A public hearing on this application was conducted by Examiner Hamford at Richvale on December 14, 1932, at which time evidence was taken and the matter was duly submitted.

Richvale is located on the main line of Southern Pacific Company's Sacramento Division. The nearest existing agency stations to Richvale are Biggs located six miles to the South and Durham 10.7 miles to the north. The population of Richvale is

estimated to be approximately two hundred permanent residents. The district in and in the vicinity of the unincorporated town of Richvale is devoted largely to the growing of rice, which is the principal commodity handled by the railroad at this point.

A witness for Southern Pacific Company presented an exhibit showing a comparative statement of the business handled at the station of Richvale during a two-year period ending September 30, 1932. This exhibit is, in part, as follows:

	Year Ending September 30	
	1931	1932
<u>Passengers and Revenue</u>		
Agency Report (Passengers)	266	213
Agency Report (Revenue)	\$1,001.	\$710.
Milk and Cream (Cans)	20	2
Milk and Cream (Revenue)	7.	1.
<u>Freight Forwarded & Rec'd</u>		
Less-than-carload (Tons)	242	91
Less-than-carload (Revenue, local)	810.	335.
*Less-than-carload, (Revenue, interline)	<u>237.</u>	<u>50.</u>
Total Ticket Sales, milk and cream and less than carload (Revenue)	\$2,055.	\$1,096.
<u>Carloads Rec'd & Forwarded</u>		
Carloads received & forwarded	509	261
*Carload (Revenue, local)	12,553.	4,558.
Carload (Revenue, interline)	<u>19,742.</u>	<u>9,202.</u>
Grand Total (Revenue)	\$34,350.	\$14,856.
*For the items of local freight revenue the amounts shown are one-half of the total amount in order to allocate or credit to this station its proportion of the revenue derived therefrom:		

This tabulation shows that the business conducted during the twelve months' period ending September 30, 1932, as compared with the preceding year reflects a loss in revenue of \$19,494., or a decrease of approximately 57 per cent. The total direct annual station expense amounted to \$1,711., or an average of \$143. per month,

the principal item being the agent's salary. The total revenue excluding that derived from carload business is approximately 64 per cent of the station expense.

Southern Pacific Company introduced evidence to show that the station expense is only a small part of the total expense in handling shipments. Exhibit No. 1 shows that during 1931 on the Southern Pacific Company's lines station expense amounted to but 7.55 per cent of the total expense of operation.

The revenue of the Railway Express Agency, Inc. during the 12 months period ending July 31st, 1932, for express shipments forwarded and received at Richvale amounted to \$697.92. In the past the Southern Pacific Company's agent acted as express agent at this point on a commission basis. Railway Express Agency, Inc. reports that in view of the small amounts of remuneration no outside party is available to handle the agency in case the Southern Pacific Company should be permitted to withdraw its agent.

Applicant Southern Pacific Company proposes to arrange to store less than carload shipments in its warehouse under lock and key. Also, if the application is granted, the Company telephone will be made available to patrons to communicate with adjacent agent for the purpose of ordering cars, or other railroad information.

A number of witnesses offered testimony to oppose the granting of the application. It was their contention that the removal of the agent would result in an inconvenience to the shippers in order^{ing} cars and that they would be deprived of the service of receiving notice of the arrival of less-than-carload freight shipments and would be required to secure the key to the Station Warehouse and telephone from a Custodian.

After fully considering the evidence in this proceeding, the Commission believes that the amount of business offered to Southern Pacific Company does not justify the expense of maintaining an agent at this point, particularly in view of the fact that there are agency stations located within a short distance in either direction and, therefore, this application should be granted.

The application of Railway Express Agency, Inc. should also be granted, authorizing the closing of its agency at Richvale, since it appears that there is no one available to handle the Express Agency.

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 now fully advised, and basing its Order on the findings of fact as appearing in the Opinion which precedes this Order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Southern Pacific Company and Railway Express Agency, Inc., respectively, are hereby authorized to abandon their agency at Richvale, Butte County, and to change their station records and tariffs accordingly.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that the authorization herein granted is subject to the following conditions:

1. Applicants shall continue said station as a non-agency station.
2. The abandonment of this agency shall not result in an increase in fare for passengers boarding trains at this point.
3. Applicants shall notify the public of the abandonment of said agency by posting notice, for at least ten (10) days prior to its closing, in a conspicuous place at said station of Richvale.

4. Southern Pacific Company shall store less-than-carload freight shipments under lock and key in Company's warehouse and the railroad telephone located at this station shall be made available to its patrons. The keys to both warehouse and telephone shall be obtainable from a Custodian located at or near said station and notice advising patrons where keys may be secured shall be maintained at both warehouse and telephone.

5. Railway Express Agency, Inc. shall continue to handle express shipments moving into or out of said point, providing they are tendered to or received from an express messenger at car door of trains stopping at said point.

6. Applicants shall within thirty (30) days thereafter notify the Commission of the abandonments herein authorized and of its compliance with the conditions hereof.

7. The authorization herein granted shall lapse and become void if not exercised within one (1) year from the date hereof unless further time is granted by subsequent Order.

The authority herein granted shall become effective on the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 16th day of January, 1933.

C. S. Leary

W. J. Carr

W. B. Harris

Arthur W. ...

5. Commissioners.