

Decision No. 11248

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ORIGINAL

In the matter of the complaint by the Commission, on its own motion, against the WEST SIDE NATURAL GAS COMPANY of Taft, California, as to the reasonableness of its rates or charges.

Case No. 1828.

Joseph Haber, for West Side Natural Gas Company, Respondent.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

This proceeding was instituted by the Railroad Commission, on its own motion, against West Side Natural Gas Company for the purpose of effecting a complete determination of the accuracy of all gas meters used by this Company in serving its consumers and for the further purpose of providing for the proper adjustment and correction of all meters found to be registering inaccurately. A careful series of tests was made by the Commission's engineers, wherein over one hundred meters were tested. This investigation indicated that the gas meters of respondent used for measuring gas to its consumers were generally inaccurate and were registering in excess of the true amount of gas delivered.

A hearing in this matter was held in Taft before Examiner Satterwhite on November 2nd, 1922, at which time testimony by respondent and the Commission's engineers was heard and

the matter submitted. A report setting forth tests made upon all of respondent's meters by engineers J. O. Wiley and R. M. Bauer, of the Commission, was submitted in evidence as indicating the general inaccuracy and over-registration of these meters. The accuracy of the meter prover used by the Commission in these tests was questioned by respondent, who alleged that a small leak existed in the prover fittings during the time while the last twenty meters were being tested. Testimony by Mr. Wiley set forth that this prover had been carefully calibrated and certified correct by the Railroad Commission but a short time previous to these tests and to the best of his knowledge no such leak existed. In passing, it might be noted that if a leak in the prover has existed, as alleged, then any meters so tested would be found to be more inaccurate and registering even faster than reported, if tested upon a tight prover.

Mr. Harry L. Masser, Assistant Engineer for the Commission, testified as to certain measures he believed necessary for respondent to take in connection with this proceeding to comply with General Order No. 58 of the Railroad Commission. He stated that it was his opinion that all of respondent's meters should be removed and tested under the supervision of the Commission, and in a manner satisfactory to it, within the shortest period of time practicably possible and that inaccurate meters should be properly repaired and adjusted before being returned to service. In order to do this work properly, he recommended that respondent purchase a new and satisfactory meter prover and obtain the use of an additional prover; that a new meter testing shop of brick or tile construction should be obtained; that an adequate number of meter repair men and service men

be employed to permit the complete testing of all meters at the earliest possible date; and, further, that from 150 to 200 accurate meters be obtained in stock prior to the start of the testing in order to expedite the work. .

After consideration of Mr. Masser's recommendations, respondent advised the Commission of its willingness to fully comply with the proposed measures for the testing and repair of its meters and the installation of new equipment and facilities as believed necessary by the Railroad Commission.

At the hearing in this matter complaint was made by Mr. B. Gallaway, a resident of South Taft, alleging his meter to be inaccurate and that even after repeated requests to the Company it had failed to test the meter and inform him of its accuracy, and that he believed the present gas rates in South Taft were unreasonable.

It appears advisable, at this time, to direct the West Side Natural Gas Company to carry on the test of all meters, in order to determine the accuracy of the same and to postpone deciding the matter of reparation to a later date, when more complete evidence will be available. The Commission is convinced that justification exists for a complete investigation of the existing rates of the West Side Natural Gas Company and this proceeding will be continued for further consideration of the reasonableness of the rates. A further hearing will be set to consider these matters after sufficient time has elapsed to determine the accuracy of meters and for the Commission's engineers and accountants to make the necessary investigations of the property and operations of the Company.

O R D E R

The Railroad Commission, on its own motion, having made complaint as to the reasonableness of the rates or charges for gas measured by the meters of West Side Natural Gas Company, a hearing having been held and evidence having been submitted indicating that the meters of West Side Natural Gas Company are generally inaccurate and registering in excess of the true amount of gas delivered to the consumers,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, That West Side Natural Gas Company shall-

(1) purchase a new and accurate gas meter prover of a type approved by this Commission and shall, in addition, procure the use of another prover for the purpose of expediting the testing of all its meters;

(2) proceed without delay to obtain a suitable meter testing shop of brick or tile construction to be approved by the Railroad Commission;

(3) within thirty (30) days from the date of this order, proceed with due diligence to make complete and careful tests of all gas meters in service upon its system under the supervision and in the manner prescribed by the Railroad Commission, keeping full record thereof and, further, that all inaccurate or imperfect meters be properly repaired, tested and made accurate before being returned to service;

(4) employ additional meter repair men, service men and others, together with such additional facilities or equipment as may be necessary in the opinion of the Railroad Commission for this work;

(5) within thirty (30) days from the date of this

order have on hand and in stock at least one hundred fifty (150) gas meters of proven accuracy meeting the requirements of General Order No. 58 of the Railroad Commission.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 18th day of November, 1922.

W. B. Brundage
Dwight Martin
Charles H. Brown
J. T. Brundage
Commissioners.