

**ORIGINAL**  
BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Decision No. 1800

BUSINESS MEN'S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF HEALDSBURG,

Complainant,

vs.

Case No. 606.

NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD COM-  
PANY,

Defendant.

E. M. Norton for complainant.  
Lillienthal, McKinstry & Raymond and Albert Raymond  
for defendant.

GORDON, Commissioner.

OPINION

In this case the Business Men's Chamber of Commerce of Healdsburg petitions the Commission for an order requiring the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company (1) to furnish and maintain lights on its platform at its depot in the city of Healdsburg, that all exits and landings from passenger trains may be thoroughly illuminated after dark; (2) to install and maintain a sufficient supply of towels in the lavatories of its boats and trains for the accommodation and use of the traveling public; and (3) to install and maintain suitable warning devices at the highway crossings of Matheson, North and Grant streets, to afford protection and warning to users of the highway at the respective streets.

The present lighting facilities at Healdsburg Station (a combined freight and passenger station) consist of three 100 watt Tungsten lamps, one of which is so located as to serve the freight platform. A second light is located in front of the ticket office, and the third light is located near the end of the station, serving the point at which passengers approach the station from the street as well as furnishing light on the track side of the station.

A cluster of two lights, each of 40 watt capacity, is

maintained by the city of Healdsburg over the center of the street approaching the station, and while these lights render service in the illumination of the approach to the station from the street, they do not assist in the illumination of the station platform at the point where northbound passenger trains stop to discharge passengers. The efficiency of the light located to serve the freight platform is materially lessened as being of service in the illumination of the station ~~in~~ platform on which passengers alight by the practice of permitting freight cars to stand on the "house-track", (which is between the station and the main line on which passenger trains receive and discharge passengers) for loading or unloading freight.

The principal objection regarding the inadequate lighting facilities is made by passengers arriving from the south on the evening trains, such trains usually consisting of three or four cars. It appears to be customary for the Northwestern Pacific Railroad to stop the trains arriving from the south so that the baggage car is about opposite the baggage room of the Healdsburg Station, and passengers alighting from the forward steps of the smoking car have proper light on the station platform, but those alighting from the rear platform of the smoking car, or either platform of the day coach, (or coaches should four cars be in service), have no illumination of the platform to aid in safely alighting, and as aged and infirm people, ladies and children are occupants of the day coaches, proper illumination of the station platform should be provided as a measure of safety and to prevent accidents.

I am of the opinion that the lighting facilities at the station of Healdsburg can be satisfactorily improved by the installation and maintenance of two additional lights, each of 100 watt capacity, one to be located over the station platform at a point approximately opposite a tank or pump-house about 200 feet south of Healdsburg Station; the other to be located at a point on the south end of the freight portion of the Healdsburg Station and to be placed at a

height sufficient to illuminate the station platform where passengers alight and in such manner that light will be available for passengers even when freight cars may be standing at the freight house.

The furnishing of towels in the lavatories of the boats and trains of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad is a convenience for passengers that has become customary, by reason of such facilities being furnished by the transcontinental lines, and by reason of such custom and for sanitary reasons, the traveling public request that such conveniences be available. At the hearing of this case the counsel for the Northwestern Pacific Railroad advised that the lavatories on the boats and on all passenger coaches equipped with wash basins had been provided with paper towels for the convenience and use of the company's patrons.

The highway crossings in the city of Healdsburg considered in this case are those located at Grant, North and Matheson streets and for convenience the conditions existing at each of these intersecting crossings will be considered separately.

At Grant street the view on the railroad looking north is unobstructed. The view on railroad looking south is obscured on the town side by an orchard and on the other side by the buildings comprising the fruit packing plant of the firm of Miller and Gobbi. The highway view looking away from the town is obscured on the north side by an orchard but has an unobscured view on the south side. The highway view looking toward Healdsburg is obscured on the north side by the buildings constituting the fruit packing plant of the firm of Miller and Gobbi, and by a large tree. On the north side the view is fairly clear and unobstructed. The highway approach from this side is on a descending grade. Grant street is a main traveled road leading from Healdsburg to an agricultural district known as Dry Creek Valley, and is used extensively by teams and automobiles. Owing to the heavy travel across the railroad tracks at this crossing and the fact that the approaches to the crossing are obscure, the necessity for some form of crossing protection or auto-

matic alarm bell and wigwag device is apparent, and it is my opinion that such a device should be installed at this point.

At North Street the railroad view looking south is entirely obscured on the town side by buildings. The track curves toward the town and the crossing is located on the curve. This crossing is located just inside the north yard limits of the city of Healdsburg. The railroad view looking north is clear on the side away from town, but is entirely obscure on the town side on account of shade and fruit trees. The approach on the highway looking away from Healdsburg is entirely obscured on the south side by reason of two barns located close to the track and on the north side by reason of two residences and a row of trees, which latter are located on the street curb line. The highway view of this crossing looking toward Healdsburg has a clear view of the crossing on the north side until at a point about 150 feet from the crossing, where the view is badly obscured by five large trees, which are located on what would appear to be a proposed street curb line. On the south side there is a practically clear view, but as the railroad track is on a  $3^{\circ} 30'$  curve this view is restricted to a point about 550 feet south of the crossing.

North Street is a main traveled street leading to the territory known as Dry Creek Valley and is also used as a method of access to portions of the Russian River. The travel over this street is not as great as that existing at Grant Street, but due to the obscurity of the view from the highway approaches, and the further fact that the railroad is located on a curve at this point, the danger caused by the obscurity and curvature is about equivalent to that existing at Grant Street where the heavy travel on the highway renders the installation of an automatic flagman or wigwag signal necessary as a safety measure for the protection of the public using the highway. I am of the opinion that the safety of the public using North Street crossing of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad in the city of Healdsburg requires the

installation of an automatic wigwag warning signal equipped with a bell, this for the reason that the obscurity of this crossing and the fact that the railroad at this point is located on a curve contribute materially to the hazard of accident at this particular crossing.

At Matheson Street the railroad view looking south shows the crossing on a curve with the view obscured on the town side by a dense growth of young trees, a garden, and a galvanized iron building occupied by the Healdsburg Oil Company. The view on the side away from Healdsburg is partially obscured by a row of trees planted just outside the railroad right-of-way, evidently originally intended for a wind brake. The railroad view looking north shows the crossing on a curve with the view obstructed on the Healdsburg side by a packing house, its adjacent buildings and by trees on the street. The view is obstructed on the side away from town by a dense orchard. The view on the highway looking away from Healdsburg is obscured on the north side by a young orchard and a galvanized iron building occupied by the Healdsburg Oil Company. The view on the south is obscured by a packing house, its adjacent buildings and trees. The highway approach on this side is on an ascending grade to the crossing. The highway approach toward Healdsburg is obscured towards the north by a row of trees, a windmill and a large oak tree,      Toward the south the view is obscured by an orchard.

Matheson Street is also a main traveled road leading to a portion of Dry Creek Valley and the territory in the vicinity of the Russian River, but it is not according to testimony developed at the hearing of this case used to the same extent as is Grant Street or even North Street. A further fact developed is that Matheson Street is not only within the yard limits of the City of Healdsburg where a speed ordinance of 10 miles per hour is in effect by resolution of the City Trustees and the time-table rules of the Northwestern-Pacific Railroad Company, but also that Matheson

Street, being but a short distance from the station of Healdsburg, trains pass over the crossing at Matheson Street under control at all times and in either direction, due to the slowing down of south-bound trains to make the station stop and the fact that north-bound trains have not reached the speed limit permissible in the city limits of Healdsburg after having made the station stop. In view of these facts I am of the opinion that no undue hazard will be imposed on the travelers on the highway at Matheson Street if at the present time no additional warning protection be installed at this point. The train service of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company at the present time is of limited extent and the comparatively moderate speed in evidence at Matheson Street leads to the conclusion that the installation of automatic protective devices could be deferred until such time as the train schedules of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad through the city of Healdsburg were considerably increased or the traffic on the highway at Matheson Street was in greater frequency. I therefore submit the following form of order:

O R D E R.

The Business Men's Chamber of Commerce of Healdsburg having filed a complaint requesting that the Northwestern Pacific Railroad be required to furnish and maintain adequate lights on its platform at its depot in the city of Healdsburg, that all exits and landings from passenger trains may be thoroughly illuminated after dark; that the said Company be required to install and maintain a sufficient supply of towels in the lavatories of its boats and trains for the accommodation and use of the traveling public; and that the said Company be required to install and maintain suitable warning devices at the highway crossings of Matheson, North and Grant Streets in the city of Healdsburg, to afford protection and warning to users of the highway at the respective streets, and a full investigation, and public hearing of

the matters and things involved having been had, and the Commission being fully advised in the premises,--

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company install within a period of thirty (30) days from the service of this order and thereafter maintain two additional incandescent lights, each of 100 watt capacity, one to be located over the station platform at Healdsburg at a point approximately opposite a tank or pump house situated about 200 feet south of Healdsburg Station; the other to be located at a point on the south end of the freight portion of Healdsburg Station on the track side of the station and to be so located and at a height sufficient to illuminate the station platform where passengers alight so that proper illumination will be available even when freight cars are standing at the freight house; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company immediately install and hereafter maintain towels in all lavatories on its passenger steamers and in all lavatories on its passenger cars when such lavatories are equipped with wash basins. The furnishing of paper towels is considered preferable as against cloth towels for sanitary reasons; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that at the highway crossings of Grant and North Streets in the city of Healdsburg that the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company shall within ninety (90) days from the service of this order erect and thereafter maintain at each of these crossings an automatic crossing flagman, consisting of a wigwag and alarm bell, equipped with a lamp or lamps for the illumination of the device as a warning to the users of the highway during hours of darkness. These automatic crossing protective devices to be of a design either similar to that now installed by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad at or near its station of San Anselmo, or any other design or type that may be presented by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company and which may be

approved by this Commission. The Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company shall also present within thirty (30) days from the service of this order a sketch showing the crossing of Grant and North Streets with its line of railroad and the points at which it is proposed to locate and install the automatic crossing flagman or wigwag signals for the approval of this Commission.

The foregoing opinion and order are hereby approved and ordered filed as the opinion and order of the Railroad Commission of the State of California.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 15th day of September, 1914.

W. L. David  
Chas. G. Brown  
Max Thelen

Commissioners.