

ORIGINAL

DECISION NO. _____

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

In the Matter of the Installation of)	
Switch Lights on Main Line Switches)	
of PETALUMA AND SANTA ROSA RAILWAY)	CASE NO. 1067.
COMPANY.)	

E. H. Maggard for Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway Company.

GORDON, Commissioner.

O P I N I O N.

This proceeding was brought on the Railroad Commission's initiative under the provisions of Section 42 of the Public Utilities Act, which section provides as follows:

"SEC. 42. The Commission shall have power, after a hearing had upon its own motion or upon complaint, by general or special orders, rules or regulations, or otherwise, to require every public utility to construct, maintain and operate its line, plant, system, equipment, apparatus, tracks and premises in such manner as to promote and safeguard the health and safety of its employees, passengers, customers, and the public, and to this end to prescribe, among other things, the installation, use, maintenance and operation of appropriate safety or other devices or appliances, including interlocking and other protective devices at grade crossings or junctions and block or other systems of signalling, to establish uniform or other standards of construction and equipment, and to require the performance of any other act which the health or safety of its employees, passengers, customers or the public may demand."

A public hearing was held at San Francisco on May 3, 1917, the matter was duly submitted and is now ready for decision.

Recommendations having been made by the Service Department of the Commission that switch lamps be installed on all main line switches of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway and a formal hearing having been requested by the General Manager of that Company, an order instituting investigation on the Commission's own motion was made by the Commission under date April 13, 1917.

The Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway operate the following rail mileage:

Petaluma to Santa Rosa	-	24.41	miles.
Sebastopol to Forrest-			
ville	-	7.18	"
Liberty to Two Rock	-	<u>5.35</u>	"
Total			37.94 miles.

The working time schedule of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway shows the following passenger trains scheduled under Timetable No. 22:

Petaluma to Sebastopol	-	12
Sebastopol to Terminus	-	
Santa Rosa	-	18
Sebastopol to Forrestville	-	16
Petaluma to Liberty	-	6
Liberty to Sebastopol	-	1
Liberty to Two Rock	-	6
Sebastopol to Petaluma	-	13
Terminus-Santa Rosa to Sebastopol	-	18
Liberty to Petaluma	-	5
Forrestville to Sebastopol	-	16
Two Rock to Liberty	-	<u>6</u>
Total		117

The above covers only the scheduled passenger service and in addition there are such freight and work trains as may be required by the business offering. Trains are operated as late as 1.35 AM and the considerable amount of night operation renders adequate protection necessary for the safety of passengers and employes.

The scheduled speed according to time card between Petaluma and terminus - Santa Rosa, is approximately 22 miles per hour, and the speed between Petaluma and Sebastopol, largely over private right of way, is scheduled at approximately 29 miles per hour, although in connection with several inspections it has been found that this speed is considerably exceeded at times, and speeds of from 40 to 42 miles per hour have been noticed by inspectors of the Service Department. High speed is always made out of Forrestville southbound by reason of descending grades. It has been observed that the average speed on this line, especially on private right of way, approximates from 30 to 32 miles per hour.

At the hearing of this case, Mr. W. J. Handford, Railroad Service Inspector of this Commission, presented a report outlining conditions observed as a result of inspections of operation on the line of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway Company, his report analyzing in detail conditions observed with particular reference to the contentions of the operating officials of the railway company as to there being no necessity for the use of switch lights to indicate the position of switches during the hours of darkness. As regards the electric headlights affording a view enabling motormen to distinguish color of switch targets at a distance of from 700 to 800 feet, Mr. Handford's report indicates that personal observations show that under normal conditions a clear view of the switch target can be obtained on tangents for a distance varying from 250 to 400 or 500 feet. A series of observations were also outlined covering a night trip during the hours of darkness in which trouble was experienced by motormen in obtaining full efficiency of the electric arc headlights. As regards switch tar-

gets located on other than tangent track the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway have several switches which are located on curves, and on curved tracks the headlights do not give a good view of switch targets, especially when target and switch stand may be located on the inside of the curve, for the reason that the headlight being fixed on the front end of the car projects its rays off the track when rounding a curve and in some instances during inspection it was noticed that headlights did not shine squarely on the switch target at any time.

The matter of placing targets on switch stands for day indication and switch lights for night indication is one that hardly needs discussion as practically all responsible and qualified operating officials realize the necessity for such appliances.

Mr. E. H. Maggard, General Manager of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway Company, stated that by reason of the unique conditions surrounding the operation of his line, he, in common with his predecessors, had never regarded it necessary to install switch lamps for night indication as to position of switches and directed specific attention to the fact that the line had been operated since 1904 without any accident attributable to the absence of switch lights.

After careful consideration of this matter and of the testimony in this proceeding, I am convinced that at least as regards the matter of switch lights conditions on the line of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway Company are not materially different from those common to many other interurban railways operating in the State of California and under the jurisdiction of this Com-

mission. It is significant that no other electric interurban railway company operates at the present time in the State of California without switch lights on all facing point main line switches. The expense of installing the switch lights and their subsequent maintenance and operation will not be a serious burden upon the financial condition of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway Company and such expense really becomes an insurance against hazard of accident and will facilitate operation in that motormen responsible for the operation of night trains will receive a clear indication as to the position of switches and will be able to operate trains without taking chances as to the position of facing point switches; such switches being always regarded as hazardous in railway operation.

I find as a fact that the night operation of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway without the protection afforded by the presence of switch lamps on main line switches is unsafe and hazardous and that switch lights should be installed and thereafter maintained for the safety of the traveling public and the employes of this carrier. I recommend the following form of order:

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held in the above entitled proceeding, and the matter having been duly submitted and the Commission being fully advised in the premises and basing its order on the findings of fact as appearing in the foregoing opinion,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED That within sixty (60) days from the date of this order the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway Company equip all main line switches with switch lamps for the purpose of

giving indication as to the position of switches during the hours of darkness and that such switch lights be thereafter maintained until the further order of this Commission.

The Commission reserves the right to make such other and further orders in this matter as to it appear just and reasonable or necessary for the safety of the passengers and employes of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railway Company or the property entrusted to its charge.

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 10th day of May, 1917.

Max Thelen

Al Gordon

Erwin O. Edgerly

Frank P. Devlin

Commissioners.