

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 6224

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

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S. PIERINI, JOE DE CESARE and  
C. PIERINI,

Complainants,

vs.

Case No. 1259.

WEST SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY  
WATER COMPANY, a corporation,

Defendant.

John Outcalt and J. R. McHenry for complainants.  
Edw. F. Treadwell by Beverley B. Blake, for  
defendants.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

The complaint alleges that defendant, a public utility serving domestic water on both sides of the Southern Pacific Railroad in South Dos Palos, Merced County, furnishes an inadequate supply of water to consumers east of the railroad tracks because of insufficient capacity of the plant, and especially of the pipes conveying water across the tracks; and that the water, which is carried in an open ditch for miles, is muddy and not fit for household or domestic use. The answer denies all of the material allegations of the complaint.

A public hearing was held by Examiner Westover at Dos Palos, February 14th. Exhibits to be filed after

the hearing pursuant to stipulation, have just been filed, and the case is now ready for decision.

The water served by defendant is diverted from the San Joaquin River and carried in an open canal about 22 miles to a ditch through which it is carried about three miles to defendant's gravel filter bed, thence into its reservoir from which it is pumped by a 2 horsepower motor into a 12,000 gallon tank on a tower about 25 feet high, and thence distributed through 34 service connections, five of which were inactive at the time of the hearing.

Complaints of service are limited to the territory lying east of the railroad tracks. Several witnesses testified for the complainants to the effect that pressure in that territory is very poor, especially during about five months in the summer of each year, although no faucet concerning which testimony was offered is more than four and one-half feet above the ground. All of the premises served are on level ground. Consumers are frequently without water for several days at a time. Many times the tank is entirely dry in the morning after being filled the night before. Defendant's witnesses admit poor service east of the tracks. There is an ample supply of water in defendant's reservoir, except on rare occasions when for as much as an hour or two at a time no water comes down the ditch, because of accident or unusual conditions on the main canal. Water must be a foot deep or more in the main canal before it will flow into the ditch leading to defendant's pump.

Witnesses for complainants and defendant

agree that the remedy for the poor service conditions east of the track will be found in installing larger pipes. It is also clear from the testimony that the entire system should be metered to conserve water.

Defendant seeks to justify its failure to improve the service on the ground that consumers are so few and its revenue so small that an adequate rate will be unreasonably high. Rates are not now before the Commission for consideration. When the question of rates is presented, the Commission will then consider all elements involved in fixing just and reasonable rates.

Defendant complains that a few meters heretofore installed were soon out of repair and were not replaced after being repaired. It is intimated that meters were wilfully injured. Defendant can guard itself against wilful injuries by establishing a rule requiring consumers to pay for injuries caused by them, or have water service cut off.

#### O R D E R

Public hearing having been held in the above entitled case, oral and documentary testimony having been presented by the parties, the matter having been submitted and being now ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that within sixty (60) days defendant install an additional 2 inch pipe independently connected with its tank and laid across the railroad tracks connecting with its main in M Street at a point opposite lot 30, block 15; and that that portion of its main in M Street between the point last indicated and

the northwesterly line of 7th Street to be replaced by a  
2 inch main; and that within ninety (90) days defendant  
complete the metering of its system.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this *26th*  
day of March, 1919.

Edwin O. Egerton  
J. J. Portland  
Harold K. Blevins  
H. K. Bonding

Commissioners.