

Decision No. 7248

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

In the Matter of the Application of)
F. F. Hoffman and A. J. Christopher,)
a copartnership, doing business as)
the Yreka-Montague Transportation)
Company, for a certificate of public)
convenience and necessity to operate)
an auto stage line between Yreka and)
Montague, in the County of Siskiyou.)

APPLICATION NO. 4513.

Collier & McNamara, for Applicants.
E. S. Taylor, Harry T. Hennessy and Luttrell & Ley
for the Yreka Railroad Company.
E. R. Raynes, City Attorney, for the City of Yreka.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

Applicants in this proceeding desire to establish an auto stage passenger service between the towns of Yreka and Montague, Siskiyou County. The distance by rail between the two points is 7.5 miles and the running time approximately 20 minutes. The railroad was built by public subscription many years ago and represents an investment of about \$100,000.

Proposed automobile service would cover six miles and a 17-minute schedule is contemplated. The two carriers would be in direct competition.

Application contemplates a passenger service only and would employ equipment to accommodate twentyeight passengers. The time schedule calls for five round trips daily, with a one-way passenger fare of 50 cents.

A hearing was held on this application before Examiner Encell at Yreka, at which time a large number of witnesses testified as to the convenience and necessity of an additional transportation line between Yreka and Montague; also as to the probable effect of such action upon the service of the existing railroad and upon the two communities affected. While the testimony diverged on such questions as the feasibility of operating an automobile service on a regular schedule during the severe winter weather, the effect on various lines of business and the general attitude of the population with reference to the proposed service, it conclusively showed a strong and predominant conviction that, as between the auto service alone and the railroad service alone, the latter would be preferable.

Undoubtedly an overwhelming percentage of the traveling public prefers the automobile to other means of transportation available in rural districts and the present instance is no exception, as the marked decrease in passenger revenue of the Yreka Railroad Company since the advent of automobiles abundantly shows, - being a drop from \$16,175.75 in 1912 to \$3,851.68 in 1918, or about 76 per cent in six years. The annual revenue from freight, however, has remained practically stationary during the years indicated, although the evidence shows that considerable quantities of freight are also hauled by truck between Montague and Yreka at the present time. The private automobile and the rent car have, to all appearances, permanently taken away three-fourths of the railroad's passenger business and the same interests are now bidding for the freight.

An extension of the railroad's business appears improbable and the testimony indicates that its revenue will not permit of improvements. On the other hand, the development of auto transportation is continuous. What the lapse of a few years will mean to these communities in the way of transportation rests largely with the population affected. However, the weight of testimony in this proceeding indicates that the public convenience, considering the transportation problem as a unit, is now being handled in a fairly satisfactory manner. The establishment of an additional passenger transportation line, although it would probably serve a limited public convenience, is not a necessity at the present time and would doubtless reduce passenger travel by rail to a minimum. The railroad company affirms that as a result of such reduced passenger patronage its entire operation would have to cease.

The testimony further indicates that one or more substantial business firms in Yreka would probably discontinue and the general community receive a setback should the railroad permanently abandon its service.

For the foregoing reasons, we are of the opinion that public convenience and necessity do not at the present time require the establishment of an auto stage service for passengers between Yreka and Montague and that the application should be denied.

O R D E R

F. F. Hoffman and A. J. Christopher having made application to this Commission for authority to operate an auto stage passenger service between the towns of Yreka and Montague, Siskiyou County, a hearing having been held thereon, and it appearing that the public convenience and necessity do not at the present time require the inauguration of the proposed service, the application is hereby denied.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 11th day of March, 1920.

W. H. Loveland
Frank R. Olsen
H. H. Brundage
Iving Martin
Commissioners.