

Decision No. 8634

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of
WESTERN MOTOR TRANSPORT COMPANY, a
corporation, for certificate of pub-
lic convenience and necessity to op-
erate an auto stage line for the
transportation of persons between
Oakland and Healdsburg, via Vallejo,
Napa, Yountville, Oakville, Ruther-
ford, St. Helena, Calistoga and in-
termediate points.

Application No. 6337.

In the Matter of the Application of
GEORGE BROWN and J. A. CASSON for
certificate of public convenience
and necessity to operate passenger
service between Vallejo and Calistoga.

Application No. 6396.

Sanborn & Roehl, by DeLancy Smith, for
Applicants.

H. W. Brunk for George Brown and J. A.
Casson.

John T. York for San Francisco, Napa &
Calistoga Railway, Protestant.

L. Richardson for Southern Pacific Co.,
Protestant.

H. H. Whitmore for Napa Chamber of Commerce.

Wm. F. Bornhorst for St. Helena Chamber of
Commerce.

C. S. Piner for Calistoga Chamber of Commerce.

Harry Wheatley for Napa County Farm Bureau.

BY THE COMMISSION.

O P I N I O N

Western Motor Transport Company applies for authority
to operate an auto stage line as a common carrier of passengers

between Oakland and Healdsburg via Napa, Calistoga, and intermediate points.

George Brown and J. A. Casson apply for authority to operate a passenger stage service between Vallejo and Calistoga via Napa.

A public hearing was held upon both applications by Examiner Westover at St. Helena, at which leave was granted to Messrs. Brown and Casson to amend their application by including Healdsburg as a point to be served via Calistoga, there being no objection offered to the proposed amendment. By stipulation, both applications were consolidated for hearing and decision, as much of the testimony presented applies equally to both.

The Southern Pacific Company operates two trains daily in each direction between South Vallejo and Calistoga, and connecting with all points on its system. Its scheduled trip time between South Vallejo and Calistoga is from 1 hour, 37 minutes, to 1 hour, 48 minutes; between Oakland and Calistoga from 2 hours, 57 minutes, to 3 hours, 5 minutes; and between Sacramento and Calistoga from 3 hours, 23 minutes, to 4 hours, 15 minutes. No complaint of its service was made at the hearing. It appears that it furnishes seats for all passengers and operates its trains safely and substantially on time. During November, 1920, an average traffic month, it carried locally between Vallejo and Calistoga and intermediate points 736 one way and round trip passengers and 33,354 commutation passengers; and between above points and San Francisco and Oakland 17,387 one way and round trip passengers and 10,160 commutation passengers. There were also 537 passengers carried between Napa Valley points and Sacramento.

San Francisco, Napa and Calistoga Railway operates six electric trains daily in each direction between Calistoga and Vallejo, where they make close connection with the boats of the

Monticello Steamship Company to and from San Francisco. Its scheduled trip time between Vallejo and Calistoga is about 1 hour, 55 minutes, and the scheduled time of the steamers between Vallejo and San Francisco is 1 hour, 45 minutes. It also operates four additional round trips daily between Napa and Vallejo. During 1920 the electric line operated 7195 trains outside of yard limits, of which 28% were operated upon scheduled time. Of the 12% of trains late, 11.2% were late on account of steamer connections. Of 646,330 passengers carried during the year, 224,631, or 34½%, were carried at reduced rates, mostly at rates less than 1½¢ per mile. Of its revenue, from 87% to 90% is derived from passenger traffic and over 50% of this traffic is between Napa and points south thereof. Most of its commutation business is on the southerly portion of its system, the Mare Island Navy Yard and several industrial enterprises being located near its Vallejo terminal.

The principal complaint of its service at the hearing was because of lack of seats at times during peak hours and the handling of holiday crowds. The boat leaving from San Francisco at 6:00 P. M. is usually met at Vallejo by a three-car train, and, at times of heavy traffic, by two three-car trains. Effort is made to load passengers so that it will not be necessary to move them in the train from car to car. One car is usually dropped at Napa, one at Rutherford, and the remaining car taken through to Calistoga. Complaint is made that it is frequently necessary for through passengers to transfer at Napa or Rutherford to the Calistoga car. The line's equipment consists of eleven motor cars, seating from 56 to 68 passengers each, and three trailers, seating 62 passengers each. It appears from the testimony that at times passengers are standing in one car while there are available seats in other cars, but that usually passengers are seated by the time the north city limits ^{of Vallejo} are reached,

but that in periods of very heavy traffic or handling the holiday crowds, northbound passengers are sometimes required to stand until Napa is passed. Apparently these conditions can be remedied by more careful loading at Vallejo and, if necessary, by keeping more of its available equipment in or near Vallejo or Napa. It does not appear from the testimony that either applicant would be able to appreciably relieve the situation at peak hours, as all four of the eighteen busses hereafter referred to would seat but few more than one of the electric company's cars.

Calistoga enjoys a large amount of resort and week end travel during the summer months, but facilities to handle it are usually adequate.

Applicant, Western Motor Transport Company, proposes to operate four round trips daily between Oakland and Healdsburg, serving as intermediate points Vallejo, Napa, Yountville, Oakville, Rutherford, St. Helena, Calistoga, Kellogs and Alexander Valley, using four 18 to 20 passenger stages. Its proposed one-way rates to and from points on the electric line are the same as the latter's, but with no round trip or commutation rates. It proposes to provide other stages as needed from its equipment now used on its other lines, in connection with which it proposes to operate the route herein applied for. It now operates in connection with the San Francisco, Napa and Calistoga Railroad through an interchange of passengers at Vallejo, this service having been inaugurated during July, 1920. During the remainder of 1920, 1832 passengers were thus interchanged, - 903 originating on the electric line and 929 originating on the stage line.

By Decision No. 6481 of July 3, 1919, Western Motor Transport Company's predecessor in interest was authorized to operate its Sacramento service via Napa and Cordelia, but was restricted against taking local passengers between Napa and Vallejo or intermediate

points. By Decision No. 8466 of December 20, 1920, the Commission authorized it to operate between Oakland and Healdsburg via Napa and Santa Rosa. Operation of the route was delayed pending the placing in service of a new large ferry boat by the Rodeo-Vallejo Ferry Company and suitable modification of the stage company's proposed schedule after trials of the new ferry boat in actual operation. Operation of the new route via Santa Rosa we are advised will begin about March 1, 1921, the delay being occasioned by mechanical difficulties with the new boat and terminals. It appears that there are about 250 families residing in the mountains along the route between Healdsburg and Calistoga who are without means of transportation at present, and that there is considerable travel between the two points and as far south as St. Helena. The Western Motor Transport Company having had large experience in operating stage lines appears to be well qualified to operate the route between Healdsburg and Calistoga.

Messrs. George Brown and J. A. Casson applied for authority to operate passenger stage service between Vallejo and Calistoga, - nine trips northbound and eight southbound daily, using seven passenger touring cars. At the hearing, by stipulation of parties, they were granted leave to amend their application so that it would include service between Calistoga and Healdsburg. They are without experience in the business in this locality although both partners have driven stages for short periods in other localities.

Witnesses from Napa, Yountville, Rutherford, St. Helena, Calistoga and Healdsburg testified as to present traffic conditions in their respective communities. It appears from their testimony and from the data presented in evidence by the rail carriers that there is a great deal of travel between points in the Napa Valley and San Francisco, much less between Napa Valley points and east bay points, and but little between Napa Valley points and Sacramento or Sacramento Valley points. It also appears that this

traffic is well served by the present carriers and that public convenience and necessity do not now require additional service between those points, but do require the proposed service between Calistoga and Healdsburg.

It also appears from the testimony that there is a very strong public sentiment in the Napa Valley against the operation of motor stages or busses, the principal ground of objection being that the rail carriers furnish adequate service and should be protected to keep them financially able to continue their service; that the highway proposed to be travelled by the stages was constructed and is maintained by the County without State aid; that stage operations would wear it unduly and without compensation; and that the added use of the highway by the usual type of stage driver would prove a menace to other travellers upon it. The matter was discussed by a number of civic bodies in the Valley, some of which held public meetings to discuss the question. The Napa Valley Chamber of Commerce took a referendum vote in which 350 ballots were mailed; 186 were voted, 113 being against and 73 for motor bus service. Where formal action was taken by such civic bodies, the results shown at the hearing were against permitting the operation of any stage lines in the Valley.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held upon both of the above entitled applications, both being submitted and now ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Application No. 6396 of George Brown and J. A. Casson be and it is hereby denied; and that Application No. 6337 of Western Motor Transport Company, in so far as it relates to authority to operate between Napa and Calistoga and to serve locally between Vallejo and Napa, be and it is hereby denied.

THE RAILROAD COMMISSION HEREBY DECLARES that public convenience and necessity require the operation by Western Motor Transport Company of automobile passenger stage service between Healdsburg and Calistoga, serving Kellogs and Alexander Valley as intermediate points; but that public convenience and necessity do not require stage service between Calistoga and Napa or any points intermediate thereto, nor local stage service between Napa and Vallejo or points intermediate thereto. Nothing herein contained shall affect any rights referred to in Decision No. 6481 of July 3, 1919, relating to service between Napa and Vallejo.

The operative rights and privileges hereby established may not be transferred, leased, sold nor assigned, nor the service abandoned unless the written consent of the Railroad Commission thereto has first been procured.

No vehicle may be operated in said service unless said vehicle is owned by the applicant herein or is leased by said applicant under a contract or agreement satisfactory to the Railroad Commission.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that the said applicant shall, within twenty days from the date hereof, file with the Railroad Commission its schedule and tariffs covering said proposed service, which shall be in addition to proposed schedule and tariff accompanying the application, and shall set forth the date upon which the operation of the line hereby authorized will commence, which date shall be within ninety days from date hereof, unless time to begin operation is extended by formal supplemental order.

The authority herein contained shall not become effective until and unless the above mentioned schedule and tariffs are filed within the time herein limited.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 21st day of February, 1921.

H. D. Board
Frank W. Board

H. J. Board
George W. Board
Charles W. Board

Commissioners.