

Decision No. 9279

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ORIGINAL

In the Matter of the Investigation)
on the Commission's own motion of)
the necessity for additions, exten-)
sions, improvements to, or changes)
in, the existing plant, equipment)
and facilities of the Lake Hemet)
Water Company to secure adequate)
service.)

Case No. 1595.

Eunsaker, Britt and Cosgrove, by T. B. Cosgrove,
for Lake Hemet Water Company.

Henry Goodcell and W. G. Irving, for consumers.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

The above entitled matter is a proceeding instituted on the Commission's own motion for the purpose of investigating the water supply, for this season, of the Lake Hemet Water Company, a public utility engaged in the business of supplying water for domestic and irrigation purposes in the vicinity of Hemet, Riverside County, California.

Several informal complaints had been filed by consumers under this system, alleging insufficient supply for the coming season, and the Commission's engineers had reported to the same effect. Accordingly the Commission issued its order directing the Lake Hemet Water Company to appear and show cause, if any it had, why the Com-

mission should not make its order directing that such additions, extensions, repairs, improvements or changes be made in such particulars and to the extent and in the manner as the Commission might find reasonable and necessary to secure such adequate service and facilities.

A public hearing was held in this matter, at which all interested parties were given an opportunity to be heard, and prior to the hearing a field investigation was made by a representative of the Commission's Engineering Department.

The Lake Hemet Water Company's source of supply is the natural flow of the San Jacinto River and its tributaries, augmented by Lake Hemet, a storage reservoir, located on the south fork of said river.

At the beginning of this irrigation season it appeared that there would be a very serious shortage of water, as the amount stored in Lake Hemet is less than for a number of years back. It is also the fact that there is a larger acreage of full bearing orchards, which increases the amount of water required. This shortage has been somewhat alleviated by unusually heavy rains during the month of May, which has postponed the date of opening the reservoir gates by at least a month. However, the evidence shows that there will still be a shortage.

It appears that to obtain immediate relief there is only one method available and that is by drilling wells. These wells might be located within the area irrigated, as this has been proven to be underlain with water-bearing gravels. The lift in the wells already drilled in this locality varies from 85 to 190 feet. To install pumping plants in this locality would be very expensive, and the maintenance and operation expense would also be excessive due to the high lift.

There is also an artesian area above Lake Hemet dam which

at one time was developed and which, as the records show, produced approximately 200 to 250 miner's inches continuous flow. However, these wells were covered up by a flood in 1916 and at the present time are probably not producing over 50 miner's inches. A re-development of this area will add at least 150 miner's inches to the company's supply. The development expense will not be so great as to develop the same amount of water within the irrigated area, and the operation expense will be practically nil as no pumping will be necessary.

It appears from the evidence that with an additional 150 miner's inches it will be possible to bring the orchards through the season without any serious loss. As this is the approximate amount that can be developed above the reservoir without pumping, we believe that it is reasonable and just to the consumers and the company to require the latter to make this development at once.

If it appears later that a still greater supply is necessary the company can then be required to make such additional development.

O R D E R

The Railroad Commission having instituted an investigation as entitled above, a public hearing having been held and the matter being now ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

1. That the Lake Hemet Water Company be, and it is hereby directed to proceed without delay to increase its supply of water to the extent of at least 150 miner's inches (three cubic feet per second) by cleaning the old wells and by drilling the necessary new wells in the artesian area located above the Lake Hemet Dam.
2. That the Lake Hemet Water Company install a weir or weirs so that it will be possible to determine when the required development has been reached.

3. That the Lake Hemet Water Company file with this Commission within ten (10) days of the date of this order, a report showing the plan to be followed and the progress made in carrying out this order, and that it file a progress report every ten (10) days thereafter until the full development has been made.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 27th day
of July, 1921.

H. B. Judge
H. D. Loveland
Dwight Martin

Commissioners.