

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 30617

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of George Conlin, doing business as Columbia Water System, for an increase in rates and for authorization to install meters.

Application No. 21470

Rowan Hardin, for Applicant.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In this proceeding George Conlin, doing business as Columbia Water System and operating a public utility serving water in the Town of Columbia, Tuolumne County, requests an increase in rates and authority to install meters.

A public hearing in this matter was held before Examiner C. C. Brown at Columbia.

The water supply is obtained from six springs in Matelot Gulch and two springs at Bacigalupi Ranch. A supplemental supply is also obtained during the summer season by purchase from Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The water is collected in a concrete and brick reservoir located on a hill in Columbia and delivered to seventy consumers through approximately 15,000 feet of distribution mains ranging from one-half inch to six inches in diameter.

This application was filed primarily for authority to install meters in order to prevent the excessive waste and care-

lessness in the use of water. The average combined output of the springs in normal years is about six miner's inches daily during the summer season. However, all service being entirely under flat rates, it was found impossible to control the waste of water on the part of certain consumers, it being necessary generally to purchase an additional six miner's inches each summer and fall to augment the local supply. This water was charged for by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company under its regular retail schedule and made an excessive drain upon the financial resources of this small utility. In addition to this, the plant and equipment had been allowed to fall into a most serious state of disrepair, as a result of which continual complaints of inadequate and interrupted service, as well as contamination of the water, were constantly filed with this Commission to the end that a few years ago a plan of general rehabilitation was ordered to be undertaken which would eliminate, in so far as reasonably possible, a great number of these sources of complaint. In order to make the necessary improvements, a considerable sum of money was expended by the owner, including the installation of meters and a chlorinating plant. As a result of the expenditures and the increased cost of operation made necessary for the purpose of providing the consumers with a better class of service, applicant now requests an increase in water rates so that he may be in a position to meet his maintenance expenses. No complaint was presented at the hearing by any of the consumers present against the granting of a reasonable increase in rates for this utility. The present rates now charged are as follows:

FLAT RATES

Rate for domestic use in residences in  
town of Columbia-----\$1.50 per month

For sprinkling and irrigation per area  
irrigated June 1st each year throughout  
irrigation season and until rains,  
where water used for such purpose,  
minimum charge for use----- 1.50 per month

-oOo-

According to the evidence the total estimated historical cost of the present system is thirteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dollars (\$13,880) with a corresponding replacement annuity estimated to be three hundred four dollars (\$304), based upon the sinking fund method at 5 per cent. The revenues for the year 1937 amounted to one thousand two hundred and forty-five dollars (\$1,245), the revenues for the months of November and December being estimated.

The books and records of the company are incomplete as a result of several changes in ownership of this water system during the past ten years. The data available as to the actual cost of maintenance and operation were of little value. However, from the testimony presented by the Commission's engineer, it appears that under the past methods of operation the annual expenses have been in the neighborhood of nine hundred seventy-five dollars (\$975), including purchased water. From the evidence it appears that, while the cost of reading meters, repairs and billing will add considerably to the expenses, yet the saving in water resulting from the use of meters should also considerably reduce the necessity of purchasing as much water during the future summer months as has been required in the past. The following schedule of rates should give a reasonable increased revenue to the utility under existing

circumstances without placing a substantial burden upon any of the water users. A flat rate will also be established for emergencies and temporary purposes should the occasion therefor arise.

O R D E R

Application having been filed with this Commission as entitled above, a public hearing having been held thereon, the matter having been submitted and the Commission being now fully advised in the premises,

It is hereby found as a fact that the rates now charged by George Conlin, doing business under the firm name and style of Columbia Water System, for water supplied to his consumers in the Town of Columbia, Tuolumne County, are unjust and unreasonable in so far as they differ from the rates herein established and that the rates herein established are just and reasonable rates to be charged for the service rendered, and

Basing its Order upon the foregoing finding of fact and upon the further statements of fact contained in the Opinion which precedes this Order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that George Conlin, doing business under the firm name and style of Columbia Water System, be and he is hereby authorized to file with the Railroad Commission, within thirty (30) days from the date of this Order, the following schedule of rates to be charged for all water delivered to his consumers on and after the 1st day of March, 1938:

FLAT RATES

Rate for domestic residential use, per month-----\$1.75

For sprinkling and irrigation of lawns, gardens and shrubbery from June 1st each year throughout irrigation season, minimum charge per month-----\$1.75

METER RATES

Monthly Minimum Charges:

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Meters to and including 5/8-inch x 3/4-inch meters----- | \$1.75 |
| For 3/4-inch meters-----                                | 2.25   |
| For 1-inch meters-----                                  | 3.00   |
| For 1 1/2-inch meters-----                              | 5.00   |
| For 2-inch meters-----                                  | 8.00   |

Each of the foregoing "Monthly Minimum Charges" will entitle the consumer to the quantity of water which that minimum will purchase at the following Monthly Quantity Rates:

Monthly Quantity Rates:

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| For 600 cubic feet or less-----                 | \$1.75 |
| Next 1,400 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet-----  | .25    |
| Next 3,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet-----  | .20    |
| Next 5,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet-----  | .17    |
| Over 10,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet----- | .15    |

-ooc-

For all other purposes, the effective date of this Order shall be twenty (20) days from and after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1938.

*William H. ...*  
*Leon ...*  
*Francis ...*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioners.