

Decision No. 32001

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of THE ATCHISON,
TOPEKA AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY, a corporation,
(hereinafter called Atchison Company) and RAILWAY
EXPRESS AGENCY, INCORPORATED, a corporation (here-
inafter called Express Agency) for authority to
discontinue their agency at Guernsey, California,
and to operate the same as a non-agency station.

ORIGINAL

Application
No. 22630

ROBERT BRENNAN and M. W. REED, for Applicant
J. J. DEUEL, for Kings County Farm Bureau, Protestant
CLARK CLEMENT, for Order of Railroad Telegraphers,
Protestant.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In this proceeding The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company and Railway Express Agency, Inc., request permission to abandon their joint agency at Guernsey, Kings County, and to continue it as a non-agency station.

A public hearing was held in this matter before Examiner Hall at Hanford, California, on June 1, 1939, at which time the matter was submitted.

Guernsey is located on the main line of applicant The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, 7.8 miles east of Hanford and 9.2 miles west of Corcoran (railroad direction), in Kings County, and serves an agricultural area largely devoted to raising of grain, alfalfa, cotton, and dairy cattle. It is estimated that the population of Guernsey and the surrounding area is 250 people. The business area adjacent to the station consists of two stores, one restaurant, and one general warehouse.

Applicants contend that their business has been reduced to such an extent that an agent is no longer required. In support of this position Exhibits Nos. 1 and 2 were filed. The following is a summary of these two exhibits:

REVENUE BUSINESS HANDLED BY THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA
AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY AT GUERNSEY STATION
(From Exhibit #1)

Period	Revenue - 1938			Revenue - 1939		
	Freight	Passenger	Total	Freight	Passenger	Total
Four Months						
Jan. through April	\$6,797.76	\$ 2.71	\$6,800.47	\$1,515.36	\$1.98	\$1,517.34
Twelve Months						
Jan. through December	9,312.36	176.57	9,488.93	-	-	-

NOTE: The above revenues include revenue accruing to interline carriers, as well as those accruing to applicant.

QUANTITY OF BUSINESS HANDLED BY
THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY

Item	Year 1938	Jan. to May 1939
Number of tickets sold - local	8	3
" " " " - interline	3	-
Freight - No. of Carloads forwarded	57	16
" " " " received	4	-
Freight - L.C.L. Shipments forwarded	41	7
" " " " received	304	107

REVENUE BUSINESS HANDLED BY RAILWAY EXPRESS
AGENCY - TWELVE MONTHS APRIL 1938 THROUGH
MARCH 1939 (From Exhibit No. 2)

Item	Revenues	Expenses	Number of Shipments
Total	\$9.36	\$.95	15
Average per Month	.78	.08	1

The maintenance of an agent at Guernsey costs about \$1,770 per year for the agent's salary, plus a small amount for water, lights, stationery, etc.

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company contends that the volume of business can be properly handled without the

maintenance of the agency; that the billing of cars would be handled by the train conductor; and that L. C. L. freight could be placed in the freight house and picked up by the consignee with little inconvenience. In the event the application is granted The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company expresses a willingness to appoint a custodian of the freight house so that L. C. L. shipments may be placed in the freight house with locked door. A receiver of L. C. L. freight could obtain the key from the custodian and go to the freight house, get his freight, lock the door, and return the key to the custodian.

The granting of this application was opposed by the Kings County Farm Bureau and the Order of Railroad Telegraphers on the ground that an agent was necessary for applicants to properly serve the community.

It is alleged that a large portion of the business offered the railroad at Guernsey came from the Tulare Lake Basin, the edge of which is about ten miles southwest of Guernsey.

In December 1937, and again in May 1938 floods occurred in the Tulare Lake Basin and inundated practically the entire basin. For many years this area has been a heavy producer of grain, but subsequent to the floods a very large portion of the basin could not be farmed. It is expected that in another year (unless further floods occur) the water will have sufficiently subsided to allow the land to again be cultivated. Protestants claim that when this happens the business at Guernsey will increase. It was also pointed out that a flood control project is under way at Pine Flat on Kings River, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, which, when completed, will regulate the flow of this river, thus assisting in preventing further flooding of Tulare Lake Basin.

It appears from the record that a considerable amount of the grain handled through Guernsey Station in the past has been

diverted to other means of transportation and that it will not be returned to the railroad company unless it can show the advantages of its service.

A local agent under the present system stays in his office, attends to his routine work, handles whatever business voluntarily comes to his station, and is the main contact between the railroad and the community. In order to perform this latter service the agent should be in a position to contact the people of the community and definitely know what and when transportation is needed. This cannot be done unless the agent is given sufficient latitude in his duties to allow him the freedom of his territory. It may be said that the traveling freight agents perform this contact service, but, on account of the large amount of territory they cover, they cannot adequately perform this service. The railroad company should give serious consideration to evolving a procedure in order to broaden the scope of its agent's activities.

In the instant proceeding the record clearly shows that a considerable volume of business formerly done by applicants at Guernsey has been diverted to other channels and that the volume of business remaining does not justify the continued maintenance of an agent thereat. It is to be understood, however, that if the business at Guernsey sufficiently increases, the agency should be caused to be reopened, either voluntarily by applicants or by order of this Commission. The application will therefore be granted.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held, and the matter being under submission and ready for decision

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company and Railway Express Agency, Inc., are hereby authorized to abandon their joint agency at Guernsey Station,

located on the main line of Valley Division, Kings County, California, and to change station records and tariffs accordingly; provided said station be continued as a non-agency station, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Applicants shall give not less than ten (10) days' notice to the public of said agency abandonment, by posting notice at said station.
- (2) Applicants shall, within thirty (30) days thereafter, notify this Commission, in writing, of the abandonment of the facilities authorized herein and of their compliance with the conditions hereof.
- (3) Applicant, The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, shall store less-than-carload freight shipments under lock in the company's warehouse, located at said Guernsey Station, the key to which shall be obtainable from a custodian located at or near said station, notice of which shall be maintained at said station advising prospective shippers and patrons where the key may be secured.
- (4) The authorization herein granted shall lapse and become void if not exercised within one (1) year from the date hereof, unless further time is granted by subsequent order.

The effective date of this Order shall be twenty (20) days from the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 20th day of June, 1939.

Frank C. Sullivan
Ray L. Riley
H. B. Smith
Justus J. Cameron
Commissioners