

Decision No. 38516

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the matter of the application of THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY for an order authorizing cancellation of Rule 4-II "How to count and charge for messages" and to substitute therefor a revised and simplified rule covering the count of chargeable matter in messages, in the State of California.

Application No. 25965

ORIGINAL

BY THE COMMISSION:

OPINION AND ORDER

The Western Union Telegraph Company, engaged in a general telegraph business in the State of California and in other states, herein requests authority to make revisions in its Rule No. 4 covering the counting and charging for telegraph messages.

The proposed rule, which applicant desires to substitute for its present Rule No. 4, is set forth in Exhibits "A" and "B" attached to the application. The proposed rule revises the method of counting combinations of letters, figures, symbols, punctuation marks, and other characters, and provides for the counting of each word of a proper name as a separate word. Certain of these revisions result in decreases while others result in increases of the word count. Applicant states that a study of a large number of messages showed the net effect of the proposed revisions on revenue would be negligible.

It is stated in the application that the purpose of the revisions is to simplify the present word count rule applicable to intrastate messages making such rule easier for patrons to understand, facilitating the counting of messages by Western Union's employees, eliminating to a large extent differences of opinion between telegraph operators as to the correct count which differences cause loss of operating efficiency and delays in handling traffic,

and facilitating the training of new employees thereby making them available sooner for operating assignments.

Western Union has made effective for interstate messages and intrastate messages in states other than California the rule herein proposed governing the count of chargeable matter. Telegraph operators in California handle both intrastate and interstate messages. In order to avoid confusion in counting messages, applicant proposes to apply the same rule to California intrastate messages as is now effective for interstate messages.

The proposed change in the rule, which results in counting multiple-word place names as two or more words in contrast to the present word count, appears to be disadvantageous to areas having many place names of this type. In order, however, that applicant may realize the full advantages in operating efficiency, which accrue from complete uniformity in such a basic rule as that covering word count, until such time as this matter may be reviewed on a system-wide basis, the order herein will authorize the proposed changes including those affecting multiple-word place names.

Applicant's rules and regulations, including Rule No. 4 herein proposed to be revised, were filed with the Railroad Commission on October 20, 1937 as Revised Sheet CRC No. 977-T. As the present rules are not filed on individually numbered tariff sheets as prescribed by the Commission's General Order No. 96, but are contained in a pamphlet of some 22 pages, the revision of Rule No. 4 as proposed will necessitate the refiling of the entire rules and regulations of Western Union unless special authorization to deviate from the requirements of Section II of said general order is granted.

The Commission having given consideration to this application and being of the opinion that the authority requested should be granted, that special authorization to deviate from the requirements of Section III of General Order No. 96 also should be granted, and that this is a matter in which a public hearing is not required, and finding that such changes in Rule No. 4 herein ordered which may result in increased charges are justified, therefore

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that The Western Union Telegraph Company may file

and make effective on or before April 1, 1946, the revised rule set forth in Exhibits "A" and "B" attached to the application, provided the necessary tariff filing therefor is submitted to the Railroad Commission of the State of California on or before the tenth day immediately preceding its effective date.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that The Western Union Telegraph Company is authorized to deviate from the requirements of Section II of General Order No. 96 to the extent required to file said revised Rule No. 4 without refiling its entire rules and regulations.

This Order shall become effective on the twentieth day after date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco California, this 15th day of

January, 1946.

Harold Rudman
Justin F. Casner
Francis Brown
Robert Lowell
Harold J. Kels
 (Commissioners)