

Decision No. 43668

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY, a)
corporation, for authority for)
abandonment of agency service at a)
station known as Walnut Station,)
Los Angeles County, California.)

Application No. 30648

W. J. Schall for applicant. William Stiles for
Walnut Chamber of Commerce, Albert Herrera for
The Order of Railroad Telegraphers, and
Edmund F. Airey for Walnut Fruit Growers Associa-
tion, protestants.

O P I N I O N

Union Pacific Railroad has applied for an order authorizing the abandonment of agency service at its Walnut Station, Los Angeles County, California.

A public hearing was held at Pomona, on December 9, 1949, at which time oral and documentary evidence was adduced and the matter was submitted for decision.

Walnut is located on the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad, seven and six-tenths (7.6) miles west of its Pomona agency station. The nearest agency station is Hillgrove, seven and four-tenths (7.4) miles to the west. The highway distance between the latter stations is about nine and one-half (9½) miles.

Applicant's position is that under present conditions the business handled at Walnut Station does not warrant the expense of maintaining an agency there, and that it should be made a non-agency station until such time as sufficient traffic, especially less-than-

carload shipments, develops to justify again maintaining the agency.

Walnut was, until recently, a train order station where a telegraph operator was on duty continuously. Three such operators were employed, one being the agent. Now, centralized traffic control eliminates the need for telegraphers. No longer is the agent required to be a telegrapher. Since September 1, 1949, the station has been closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Applicant's supervisor of stations testified that there was no passenger business at that station during 1948 and 1949. In 1948, there were nine inbound and two outbound LCL shipments. During the first eleven months of 1949, there were only five such inbound and one outbound shipments at Walnut station. The record further shows there was no passenger traffic. The only shipper and receiver of carload lots has been the Walnut Fruit Growers Association. The total carload shipments to and from the station was 24 inbound and 237 outbound during 1948, and 26 inbound and 201 outbound through 1949 up to December 1. The drop during 1949 was largely due to the severe freeze during the year.

The total revenue from the traffic moving through the station which was derived almost wholly from a single packing house operation and in carload shipments was \$135,170 for 1949 prior to December 1, and \$186,178 for 1948. These figures become meaningless since this revenue results from shipments largely destined to points beyond applicant's line. To continue the operation of the station at an annual cost of \$3,852 without any passenger traffic whatever and the trifling amount of LCL traffic does not appear justified.

According to the testimony, it appears that the carload business now handled at Walnut station could be efficiently handled from the railroad company's Hillgrove station. Applicant proposes

placing a company telephone at the association's office to effect direct communication with the Hillgrove station. The agent from that station would daily go to the Walnut Fruit Growers Association office late in the day during the packing season and do the necessary work of sealing cars and making the billing as required.

Applicant's passenger and freight traffic manager in Pomona stated that the proposed arrangement for serving the association would not result in any delay or inconvenience because it had been that shipper's practice to order cars from one to two days in advance. This method of handling such business from stations has been successfully employed in other places by this applicant.

The association, the Order of Railroad Telegraphers, and the Walnut Chamber of Commerce protested the abandonment. The latter protestant indicated the hope and reasonable prospect of a population growth in this community. There was some testimony by protestants that a commuter traffic to Los Angeles could be established. This latter testimony appears speculative and, if it should be realized, could be met, regardless of the continuance of the agency at Walnut, as the railroad would permit passengers to board and pay the cash fare to the conductor.

Upon full consideration of the facts of record in this application, we are of the opinion, and find, that the expense of maintenance of applicant's agency at Walnut is not justified by the business now performed there; that the number of transactions at the Walnut agency is relatively few; that no passenger-train service is operated there; that carload freight service will not be materially affected; that the less-than-carload service is so small that the inconvenience which a few patrons may have to contend with is not commensurate with the cost of furnishing agency service.

Therefore, the application will be granted.

A public hearing having been held in the above-entitled proceeding, and the matter having been duly submitted,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Union Pacific Railroad Company be, and it hereby is, authorized to abandon its agency at Walnut station, Los Angeles County, California, and to change station records and tariffs accordingly, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Applicant shall continue said station as a non-agency station.
- (2) Applicant shall give not less than ten (10) days' notice to the public of said agency abandonment by posting notice at said station.
- (3) Applicant shall install and maintain a company telephone at the office of the Walnut Fruit Growers Association, unless said association shall refuse to permit such installation and maintenance.
- (4) Applicant shall, within thirty (30) days thereafter, notify this Commission in writing of the abandonment of the facilities authorized herein, and of its compliance with the conditions hereof.
- (5) The authorization herein granted shall lapse 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 after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco California, this 4th day of January, 1950.

R. E. Anderson
Justus F. Crocker
Charles F. Dineen
Harold F. Kille
Samuel H. Lott
COMMISSIONERS