

Decision No. 42841

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RUSSELL E. SHARP,
Complainant,

vs

Case No. 5103

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY WATER COMPANY,
Defendant.

Allen C. McGurk, for complainant.
Henry F. Rager, for defendant.

O P I N I O N

Complainant Russell E. Sharp alleges that defendant water utility, due to the small size of its distribution line, has failed to supply adequate water service to his residence near Bloomington, San Bernardino County, during months of high temperatures from May to October, to the annoyance and inconvenience of complainant and his family. Complainant asks that defendant be required to rectify the defective service.

Defendant admits the inconvenience and the receipt of demands for service, but denies having represented to complainant, as alleged in the complaint, that the size of the distribution line should be increased in order to supply adequate water. Defendant, as a separate defense, alleges that it has at all times delivered adequate water under adequate pressure to complainant's meter, but that complainant's residence is located on an elevation approximately 67 feet above and 300 feet distant from the meter. Defendant asks that the complaint be dismissed.

The evidence adduced at the hearing (September 19, 1949) established that Sharp, his wife, and two small children moved into

their home in September, 1947, after having concluded arrangements the preceding spring with the utility for an extension of its pipe line along Locust Avenue to provide water service. The evidence indicates that there were several discussions between Sharp and Ellis G. Georgia, then manager of the utility's Fontana System, concerning whether a 6-inch or a 4-inch extension should be installed and whether the meter should be located at the house or at the bottom of the hill near Locust Avenue.^{1/} The proposal to extend service to a meter located at the house was discarded by the utility, and instead a 4-inch line was laid along Locust Avenue. Sharp installed a 3-inch line from the company's main to his home, and the company placed a 2-inch meter on his line at a point just off Locust Avenue. The distance from the meter to Sharp's home is 361 feet and the difference in elevation between those points is 57 feet. In addition to Sharp's home, two other residences below his level are served by extensions of 40 feet and 50 feet, respectively, from his line. One of these dwellings was not occupied for the 10-month period preceding the hearing, but Sharp kept the service open during that time. In all, there are 22 metered customers along both sides of the lower end of Locust Avenue served from the company's main. Fifteen of these services were active in 1949.

Sharp noticed "peculiarities" in the water supply and pressure shortly after moving into his home. During the summers of 1948 and 1949, especially in the late afternoons and evenings of hot days, there were frequent failures of supply, and pressure, even at

^{1/} The testimony indicates that both 6-inch and 4-inch pipe were considered for the extension. Although it seems that 6-inch pipe was originally contemplated and the charge to Sharp was based upon that size, actually 4-inch pipe, of which there was some on hand, was installed. Sharp's claim for a refund, filed in 1947, was finally paid in May of 1949 on the basis of the difference in price of the two sizes of pipe.

the meter, was low. From about 9 p.m. on, however, the supply was usually adequate and pressure was up. During these periods of scarcity, Sharp and his wife secured water from a hydrant near the meter and carried it up the hill to their home in jugs for cooking and for bathing their two children.

Two other residents, whose homes are located nearby on both sides of Locust Avenue and who receive water through the utility's Locust Avenue main, testified that while they had sufficient water for house use there was not enough during hot days to turn their sprinklers, and that pressures were low in the afternoons and evenings but strong late at night and early in the morning. One of these witnesses had installed a tank with an automatic shutoff for storing water used in connection with chicken raising on his place.

Temperature records for 111 days between June 1 and September 19, 1949, indicate that there were from 74 to 98 days (depending on the source of the data) when maximum temperatures of 90° or more were experienced at Bloomington or San Bernardino, with a substantial proportion of recordings in excess of 100°. Pressure gauge recordings taken 2 feet on the house side of Sharp's meter, between July 19 and August 27, 1949, reveal largely low pressures between the hours of approximately 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., on the one hand, and consistently high pressures for the remainder of the 24-hour period, on the other hand. As an example, during the 24-hour period August 2 to August 3, 1949, during which temperatures ranged from 62° to 110° on the utility's thermometer, the recorded pressures ranged approximately as follows:

<u>Period</u>	<u>Pounds per Square Inch</u>
11 p.m. - 5 a.m.	200 - 180
5 a.m. - 7 a.m.	200 - 60
7 a.m. - 9 a.m.	60 - 35
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.	50 - 30
3 p.m. - 9 p.m.	60 - 15
9 p.m. - 11 p.m.	50 - 200

The pressure recordings for the balance of the five-week period exhibit similar variations.

The utility's Fontana system, in the locality here under consideration, extends five miles from San Bernardino Base Line on the north to Jurupa Avenue on the south. Locust Avenue, running north and south, connects the two extremities. Santa Ana Avenue crosses Locust Avenue one-half mile north of Jurupa Avenue. Sharp's south boundary is 660 feet north of Jurupa Avenue and 1980 feet south of Santa Ana Avenue and his meter, as has been stated above, is located immediately west of Locust Avenue and 660 feet north of Jurupa Avenue on an easement for water and electric facilities. The 361-foot service line follows the curve of the road up the hill to Sharp's home.^{2/}

The utility's transmission main along Locust Avenue is constructed of 6-inch pipe to the intersection of Valley Boulevard. It then reduces to a 4-inch pipe as far as Santa Ana Avenue, at which point there is a 2-inch line 1,000 feet long to the end of which is connected the 4-inch line from which Sharp and the others are served.

According to the utility's District Manager Fisher, the system contains a number of similar installations which, it is anticipated, will be replaced by the substitution of 4-inch or larger pipe for the 2-inch lengths. He conceded that the 2-inch pipe might have contributed to Sharp's problem, but that its replacement by larger pipe would not afford a complete solution during hot weather unless Sharp were to install booster facilities. He knew of no practical way, he said, to supply the pressures Sharp said he required (in excess of 35 p.s.i.) without additional water, which could be secured by

^{2/} The McGee property, also located in the southeast portion of the lot upon which Sharp's home is constructed (Lot 485 of Semi-Tropic Land and Water Company), abuts on Locust Avenue. The pipe line passes through the McGee property before reaching Sharp's.

enlarging the pipe on Locust Avenue, supplemented by a storage tank and a booster pump with a pressure tank at the meter.

The evidence leaves little doubt but that Sharp's difficulties are the result of a combination of at least three factors: first, the location of his home at an elevation higher than that of his neighbors; second, the bottleneck effect on the flow of water along Locust Avenue produced by 1,000 feet of 2-inch pipe ahead of the 4-inch extension to his meter; and, lastly, the high seasonal temperatures in the locality with consequent heavy demands upon the system during certain hours of the day. Other factors, such as the two taps on Sharp's service line, may also have a bearing on the problem.

Under the circumstances shown by this record, we have come to the conclusion that the joint efforts of both Sharp and the utility may be required in order to relieve the situation. The existence of 1,000 feet of 2-inch pipe installed between larger 4-inch mains, however, prevents the delivery of an adequate volume of water when other consumers are drawing on the system. This condition should be remedied by the utility.

We, therefore, conclude that defendant should be required to replace the existing 2-inch main with pipe of not less than 4-inch inside diameter, on Locust Avenue between Santa Ana and Jurupa Avenues on its Fontana system.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held upon the complaint of Russell E. Sharp herein, evidence having been received, the matter having been orally argued and submitted for decision, the Commission now being fully advised and basing its order upon the findings and conclusions contained in the foregoing opinion,

IT IS ORDERED that San Gabriel Valley Water Company, defendant herein, within sixty (60) days after the effective date of this order, shall replace the existing 2-inch main on Locust Avenue, between Santa Ana and Jurupa Avenues, on its Fontana system, with a main of an inside diameter of not less than 4 inches.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty (20) days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 20th day of February, 1950.

R. J. [Signature]
Justus J. Casper
[Signature]
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Commissioners.