

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 48844

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ALFRED P. GRIFFITH, Chairman,
Committee of members representing
property owners of Tract 17192,
known as Ben Hur Estates,
Whittier, California

Complainant

vs.

WHITTIER WATER COMPANY, a corpora-
tion, Camille A. Garnier, President

Defendant

Case No. 5463

Alfred P. Griffith, for complainant.
C. L. Gardner, attorney, for defendant.
James F. Wilson and Robert M. Mann, for
the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

The above-entitled complaint was filed April 27, 1953, by eight members of a property owners' committee, Alfred P. Griffith, Chairman, of Tract No. 17192, Ben Hur Estates, Whittier, California.

Public hearings in this matter were held before Examiner Stewart C. Warner on June 12 and 26, 1953, in Los Angeles.

General Information

Ben Hur Estates Tract is located in unincorporated territory east of the City of Whittier in Los Angeles County and is bounded on the north by El Soneto Drive, on the east, approximately, by La Puebla Street, on the south by Whittier Boulevard, and on the west by La Entrada. A map filed at the hearing as Exhibit No. 9 shows its location. It comprises 81 homes.

Allegations of Complainant

Complainant alleged that during the fall of 1952 low water pressures were experienced and numerous instances of complete interruptions of water service occurred. Additional water service interruptions began in March 1953, particularly during the week of March 16 to 21. On March 21 and 22, water service was interrupted for approximately two hours each afternoon. On April 11, 1953, water service was off from 12 noon to 8 p.m. On April 12, low pressure was experienced in the afternoon. On June 3, 1953, there were low pressures and water service was off between 5:45 and 9 p.m.

As shown in Exhibit No. 6 deficient service conditions were called to the attention of defendant in writing on March 23, 1953.

Complainant alleged that during the periods of complete water service interruption, meters operated in reverse due to air being sucked through them upon the withdrawal of water from distribution pipelines. When water service was restored, air was forced through the meters, thus causing them to operate inaccurately. Bills for water service rendered to customers by defendant for the months of April and May 1953, accordingly, were disputed.

Complainant alleged that open breaks in defendant's water transmission conduits, as shown in the pictures, Exhibits Nos. 1, 2A and 2B filed at the hearing, constituted health hazards.

Answer of Defendant

Defendant's witness and president admitted all allegations except the health hazard. He testified that county health authorities were constantly testing water supplies furnished the utility's customers and no unhealthy conditions had been reported. He further testified that all domestic water served was heavily chlorinated at source.

Evidence

The record shows that the service conditions complained of were caused, in large part, by accidental breaks in defendant's main conduit leading from its main sources of water supply and by the taking out of service for repairs of a transmission conduit of California Domestic Water Service, a mutual irrigation company, through whose pipeline a substantial portion of defendant's water supplies is transmitted. The accidental breaks were caused by the operation of a caterpillar tractor on the Trinity Lutheran School grounds and other breaks were caused by highway construction.

Total water service interruptions and low pressures in the Ben Hur Estates Tract were caused by lack of water supply for defendant's system as a whole and by lack of water at defendant's Mill Street booster station.

Defendant indicated that it had added 4,270 gallons per minute of water supply to its system since January 1, 1952; that prior to that date it had facilities of 5,000 gallons per minute, making a total of 9,270 gallons per minute available for use as of May 20, 1953, to serve 7,040 consumers. New wells, drilled and being drilled, will increase defendant's water supply by 3,000 gallons per minute by August 15, 1953.

A 5,000,000-gallon reservoir located east of Scott Road and north of Whittier Boulevard, together with a booster pumping station to be constructed at said reservoir, both to be completed by July 1, 1953, and increased pumping capacity to be installed at Mill Street booster station will eliminate all service deficiencies complained of.

Defendant agreed to meet with complainant to settle disputed water bills.

Conclusions

Exhibit No. 10 filed at the hearing on June 26, 1953, is a stipulation of agreement of adjustment of accounts in the Ben Hur Estates Tract for the months of April and May 1953. By such stipulation Whittier Water Company will credit each consumer in the Ben Hur Estates Tract for one half of the water used by such consumer in excess of 800 cubic feet for each of the months of April and May 1953. This agreement will be approved by the order which follows.

It is evident from the record that defendant has taken, and is taking, major steps to provide adequate water service to the Ben Hur Estates Tract and to its water system as a whole.

The Commission should be kept advised of defendant's progress in providing and maintaining adequate water service to the Ben Hur Estates Tract and the order which follows will provide that progress reports be filed every thirty days for the next ninety days. This order will further provide that defendant shall submit to the Commission, monthly, a schedule showing the daily maximum and minimum pressures maintained at its Mill Street booster pumping station as recorded on the pressure regulating recorder located at that pumping station.

O R D E R

Complaint as above-entitled having been filed, public hearings having been held, the matter having been submitted, the Commission being fully advised in the premises,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows:

1. That the stipulation of agreement filed as Exhibit No. 10 between the parties regarding the adjustment of water bills for the months of April and May 1953, be, and it is, approved.

- 2. That defendant shall file with the Commission, in writing, on August 17, September 16 and October 16, 1953, a report of its progress in effecting the improvements to its water system and the elimination of low pressure and deficient water service conditions complained of.
- 3. Defendant shall file with the Commission, in writing, on August 17, September 16 and October 16, 1953, a schedule showing the daily maximum and minimum pressures maintained at its Mill Street booster pumping station as recorded on the pressure regulating recorder located at that pumping station.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 21st day of July, 1953.

R. E. [Signature]
President

Justus J. [Signature]

Harold [Signature]

Keneth [Signature]

Commissioners

Commissioner Peter E. Mitchell, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.