

ORIGINALDecision No. 61964

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Investigation into the operations)
 and service of Southern Pacific)
 Company with reference to maintenance)
 of a ticket agency at San Carlos,)
San Mateo County, California.)

Case No. 7020

Randolph Karr, for Southern Pacific Company,
 respondent.
William V. Ellis, for Railroad Brotherhoods,
 California Legislative Board; Frederick F.
 Kinisky, for Order of Railroad Telegraphers;
 protestants.
Sheldon Rosenthal, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

Effective October 26, 1960, pursuant to the procedure set forth in this Commission's General Order 36-B, respondent Southern Pacific Company discontinued its passenger ticket office at San Carlos, San Mateo County. The city in question is served by respondent's fleet of commuter trains operating between San Francisco and San Jose.^{1/}

Shortly after the San Carlos office was closed the Commission received communications from several individuals, and from a railroad labor organization, protesting said closing. By its Order Instituting Investigation, dated November 22, 1960, the Commission commenced this

^{1/} The record discloses that in accordance with General Order 36-B, respondent posted notice of proposed closing at the San Carlos station on July 13, 1960, having previously informed the Commission of its intent. On receipt of protests from six individuals (not the same persons as those mentioned in the second paragraph above) the Commission directed respondent to refrain from closing the San Carlos station, and stated that if respondent desired to pursue the matter further, it might do so by the filing of a formal application. Subsequently, the six protests were all withdrawn and respondent was then informed that it might proceed to close the San Carlos office. This it did, as above stated, on October 26, 1960.

proceeding to determine whether respondent should be ordered to restore its ticket agency at San Carlos and for the issuance of such orders as might be appropriate in the exercise of the Commission's jurisdiction.

Public hearing was held before Examiner Carter R. Bishop at San Carlos on February 7, 1961. The matter was taken under submission on February 23, 1961.^{2/}

At the hearing an assistant transportation engineer from the Commission's staff explained the procedures, both under General Order 36-B and by formal application, to be followed in seeking authority to close a railroad ticket office. Evidence on behalf of respondent was offered by the assistant to its passenger traffic vice-president and by a transportation analyst.

The record shows that, prior to its closing, the carrier's San Carlos office was devoted exclusively to the sale of passenger tickets and the dispensing of information relating to passenger service. All service functions relating to freight transportation were, and are, handled through the Redwood City office. Since the closing of the San Carlos office, ticket sales have been handled by mail,^{3/} by conductors on trains, and through other peninsula agencies

^{2/} At the close of the hearing a representative of the State Legislative Board of the railroad brotherhoods, protestant, was granted additional time in which to prepare evidence to be presented at an adjourned hearing. On receipt of advice on February 23, 1961 that the party in question was not in position to proceed, the matter was submitted.

^{3/} According to the passenger traffic witness, local riders are increasingly utilizing respondent's commutation ticket-by-mail plans. Under the more popular of these, a monthly commutation ticket is automatically mailed to the user a few days before the first day of each month. The purchaser mails his check in payment therefor, on the first of the month.

and the San Francisco depot. Toll free telephone service is also provided for passenger information.

The record further shows that, subsequent to the closing of the office here in issue, respondent leased same to the San Carlos Chamber of Commerce. That organization uses the office portion of the station building as its headquarters. The station waiting room, however, is still kept open from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. five days per week, for the use of respondent's patrons.^{4/} The secretary of the Chamber of Commerce testified that his organization is highly pleased with the station office facilities, particularly because of their central location in the community.

Revenues from passenger traffic at San Carlos, the record shows, were \$165,616, \$142,474 and \$103,386 for 1958, 1959 and the first nine months of 1960, respectively. Respondent estimates that the elimination of the ticket office at that point will result in a net annual saving of \$6,462 in operating expenses.

Representatives of the Order of Railroad Telegraphers and of the California Legislative Board of the railroad brotherhoods appeared for those organizations in protest against the closing of respondent's San Carlos office. They confined their participation to cross-examination of respondent's witnesses. All of the individuals who had written to the Commission protesting the closing of the San Carlos office, after it was closed, were sent notices of the time and place of hearing of Case No. 7020. None of these individuals, however, appeared at the hearing. Moreover, apart from the aforementioned brotherhood representatives, no one appeared in opposition to the closing of said office.

^{4/} Respondent arranged for the San Carlos police department to unlock and lock the station waiting room each day.

Notices of the hearing in this matter were sent, well in advance of the hearing date, to all persons and organizations believed to be interested, including city and county civic bodies. Additionally, the hearing was publicized, in advance, in the local newspapers. The absence of public interest in the proceeding is apparent from the fact that, in spite of the adequate notice given, the carrier's patrons and other members of the general public did not see fit to attend the hearing or to make any representations to the Commission subsequent to the institution of the investigation.

Upon consideration of all facts and circumstances of record, the Commission finds that public convenience and necessity do not require Southern Pacific Company to restore its ticket agency at San Carlos. The investigation in Case No. 7020 will be discontinued.

At the outset of the hearing counsel for respondent moved that the proceeding be stayed and dismissed. This motion was made on various grounds, all of which have been carefully considered. The motion is hereby denied.

O R D E R

Based upon the evidence of record and upon the findings and conclusions set forth in the preceding opinion,

IT IS ORDERED that the investigation in Case No. 7020 is hereby discontinued.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 9th day of May, 1961.

[Signature]
President
[Signature]
[Signature]
George T. Brown
[Signature]
Commissioners