

ORIGINALDecision No. 69780

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of
 THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA AND SANTA FE
 RAILWAY COMPANY, a corporation, for
 authority to discontinue agency
 service at its station at La Verne,
 County of Los Angeles, State of
 California, and to remove its station
 building therefrom.

Application No. 47638

John J. Balluff, Henry M. Moffat and A. D. Vallier,
 by Henry M. Moffat and A. D. Vallier, for applicant.

Keith A. Vose, for Transportation-Communication
 Employees Union, protestant.

Lee Streicher, for Metropolitan Water District of
 Southern California; Chester P. Lukens, for La Verne
 Chamber of Commerce; interested parties.

James R. Ritchie, for the Commission's staff.

O P I N I O N

By this application The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe
 Railway Company (Santa Fe) seeks authority to discontinue agency
 service at La Verne, Los Angeles County, and to remove the La Verne
 station building.

Public hearing of the application was held before Examiner
 Bishop at La Verne on July 8, 1965. Evidence was presented by appli-
 cant through a trainmaster, a special accountant and the division
 superintendent of Santa Fe Trail Transportation Company. ^{1/} Representa-
 tives of Transportation-Communication Employees Union and the
 Commission's Transportation Division staff assisted in the development
 of the record.

^{1/} Santa Fe Trail Transportation Company, a highway common carrier,
 is a subsidiary of applicant.

La Verne is located on the main line of Santa Fe's Los Angeles Division between the agency stations of San Dimas, 2.4 miles to the west, and Pomona, 1.2 miles to the east.

The office at La Verne is staffed by a single employee, the agent, whose hours are from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time). The station is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and designated holidays.

No passenger trains stop at La Verne but tickets may be purchased from the agent there.^{2/} Patrons, under the proposal herein, would continue to board applicant's passenger trains at Pomona.

In the event that the application is granted, the trainmaster testified, all La Verne business will be transacted through applicant's Pomona station. The latter station has a staff of ten employees and is open from 6:15 a.m. to 10:15 p.m. La Verne and Pomona, he pointed out, are in the same telephone exchange area, so that applicant's La Verne patrons will not be assessed toll charges when calling the carrier's Pomona office.

Carload shippers may, under the proposed arrangement, take their bills of lading to the Pomona office, or, if they so desire, may request the Pomona agent to pick the bills up at the shipper's premises. Also, the trainmaster testified, applicant will, on request, erect a waybill box at the La Verne siding, in which shippers may place their bills of lading. The latter would be picked up by the conductor of the local freight train when he picks up the loaded freight cars.^{3/}

^{2/} The record shows that in 1963, 1964 and the first four months of 1965 the number of tickets sold at La Verne was 5, 0 and 3, respectively.

^{3/} It is to be noted that only 3 and 4 carload shipments were forwarded from La Verne in 1963 and 1964, respectively, and none were dispatched during the first four months of 1965.

The principal consignee at La Verne, the record shows, is Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan), which is served by a spur track. Inbound carload shipments for La Verne in 1963, 1964 and the first four months of 1965 amounted to 1866, 1739 and 584 carloads, respectively. Practically all of these shipments consisted of salt consigned to Metropolitan. Under the present arrangement the La Verne agent keeps track of the latter shipments through the carrier's San Bernardino office. If the application herein is granted, the services now performed by the La Verne agent in connection with this traffic will be rendered by the agent at Pomona.

Less than carload rail shipments originating or terminating at La Verne are currently picked up or delivered by trucks of Santa Fe Trail Transportation Company. Under this arrangement, the division superintendent of that company testified, door-to-door service is accorded patrons five days per week. Requests for pickup service, under the proposed arrangement, will be lodged with the Pomona agent. There will be no change in the handling of the shipments.^{4/}

The La Verne station is a Western Union telegraph office. All telegrams filed there for transmission are telephoned by the agent to Western Union's office in downtown Pomona. Most inbound telegrams are telephoned directly from said Pomona office to addressees in La Verne. If the addressee requires delivery of a telegram, the message is telephoned from Western Union's Pomona office to the Santa Fe agent at La Verne, who then delivers the telegram personally to the addressee. According to the record, the La Verne agent handled 641, 745 and 327 Western Union messages in 1963, 1964 and the first four months of 1965, respectively. The great majority of these were inbound. In the event

^{4/} One exception to this statement was adduced at the hearing. Under existing tariff rules collection and delivery service is not accorded on less than carload shipments of household goods. If the application is granted, La Verne patrons will be required to tender or receive such shipments at the Pomona station, instead of the La Verne station.

Santa Fe agency service at La Verne is discontinued, the trainmaster stated, outbound messages may be telephoned to Western Union's Pomona office for transmission, which office is in the same telephone exchange area as La Verne.^{5/} With respect to those inbound messages which are required to be personally delivered to La Verne addressees, Western Union will necessarily make some suitable arrangement for their delivery.

According to the trainmaster, the duties now performed by the agent at La Verne, exclusive of the above-described Western Union business, can be absorbed by applicant's present station force at Pomona without impairment of the railroad's service to its patrons.

Exhibits presented by the accounting witness indicate that closing of the agency at La Verne would result in estimated annual savings of approximately \$7,300 in wages and payroll costs. Other anticipated savings in operating expenses were not measured; these included such items as utilities, supplies, and maintenance costs and taxes on the station building, which would be dismantled.

No shippers or other patrons appeared in opposition to the granting of the application. A representative of Metropolitan stated that his organization had discussed the proposal here in issue with a Santa Fe representative and that Metropolitan is satisfied that if the application is granted it will receive service equivalent to, or even better than, that which it now enjoys from Santa Fe. The union of Santa Fe's sole employee at the La Verne station appeared as a protestant. Its representative examined applicant's witnesses at some length, but offered no evidence in support of the union's position.

^{5/} The Pomona Western Union office is open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., Monday through Saturday; on Sunday it is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Commission finds that:

1. The duties, exclusive of those relating to the handling of Western Union business, assigned to applicant's agent at La Verne can be assumed and performed satisfactorily by the carrier's staff at its Pomona station, without impairment of the quality of service now accorded applicant's La Verne patrons.

2. Public convenience and necessity no longer require the maintenance by applicant of an agency at La Verne.

3. After termination of the agency at La Verne, the station building there will not be needed in public service.

The Commission concludes that the application should be granted.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company is authorized to discontinue its agency at La Verne, Los Angeles County, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company shall maintain said station in a non-agency status for the receipt or delivery of freight in any quantity, carloads or less.
- (b) Within one hundred twenty days after the effective date hereof and not less than ten days prior to the discontinuance of the agency at La Verne, Los Angeles County, The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company shall file in duplicate amendments to its tariffs showing the changes authorized herein and shall make reference in such notice and tariffs to this decision as authority for the changes. In no event shall the agent be removed, pursuant to the authority hereinabove granted, earlier than the effective date of the tariff filings required hereunder.
- (c) Within thirty days after discontinuance of service as herein authorized, The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company shall, in writing, notify this Commission thereof and of compliance with the above conditions.

2. After the authority granted by paragraph 1 of this order has been exercised and the conditions thereof complied with, The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company may remove its station building at La Verne.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 13th day of OCTOBER, 1965.

Fredrick B. Haloboff
 President

George T. Turner

Augusta

William W. Beard

Commissioners

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