ORIGINA

Decision No. 84260

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY, a corporation, for an order authorizing it to revise certain intrastate rates and charges applicable to its message telegraph and other services within the State of California.

Application No. 54601 (Filed January 28, 1974; amended December 6, 1974)

OPINION

By this application, applicant The Western Union Telegraph requests authority to increase rates for its public message and related services and that it be authorized to discontinue the singing greeting service.

According to applicant, its intrastate operations for the 12-month period ended December 31, 1972 showed a loss of approximately \$1.3 million after provision for negative income taxes. After

I/ The Western Union Telegraph Company is a corporation engaged in the transaction of telegraph and other services within the State of California and throughout the United States. Applicant is a New York corporation and its principal headquarters is located at Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. It is a subsidiary of Western Union Corporation.

A. 54601 ei

including the effect of known revenue changes and the proposed rate revisions, there remained a loss of \$938,925, or \$450,000 after provision for negative income taxes, excluding any allowance for an estimated \$673,093 increased wage and benefits cost on intrastate California operations resulting from applicant's contracts with its unions.

In its amendment to the application, applicant states that based on its forecast the intrastate California operations for the

In its amendment to the application, applicant states that based on its forecast the intrastate California operations for the 12-month period ending December 31, 1974 will produce a loss of approximately \$1.2 million after provision for negative income taxes. After including the effect of known revenue changes and the proposed rate revisions, the 1974 forecast shows a \$262,000 net operating revenue, or less than a 2 percent rate of return.

The following table shows the derivation of the figures shown above:

State of California Estimated 1974 Intrastate Operating Results (With Proposed PMS Rate Increase and Shrinkage)

Reserve Requirement - Straight-Line Remaining Life

	Total	Priva'	te Vire Ser Circuitry	vices Equipment	Hotline	Broad Band	Telex	<u>Tva</u>	Public Message Services
Average Net Invest. Base Optg. Plant & Equip. R & D in Progress Material & Supplies Working Cash Required Gross Invest. Base Less: Res. for Deprm. & Amort. Unamortized Install. Charges	2),600,000 61,000 1,004,000 1,377,000 2),042,000 6,362,000 3,000	1,563,000 4,000 84,000 1,651,000 418,000 3,000	538,000 2,000 22,000 22,000 562,000 188,000	1,025,000 2,000 62,000 1,089,000 230,000 3,000	2,307,000 7,000 93,000 2,407,000 830,000	298,000 1,000 14,000 313,000 101,000	2,590,000 14,000 146,000 2,750,000 540,000	3,941,000 4,000 213,000 4,158,000 1,862,000	31,000 454,000 1,377,000
Net Investment Base	16,677,000	1,230,000	374,000	856,000	1,577,000	212,000	2,210,000	2,296,000	9,152,000
Operating Revenues	10,734,000	340,000	129,000	211,000	356,000	10,000	591,000	1,933,000	7,444,000
Operating Rev. Deductions Departmental Expenses General & Admin. Real Estate Expenses Pensions, Benefits, SS Taxes Depreciation Amortization Miscellaneous Taxes Uncoll. Optg. Revenues Insurance Deprm. Leases Term	6,829,000 351,000 530,000 1,218,000 1,086,000 163,000 147,000 9,000	142,000 9,000 9,000 30,000 101,000 9,000 15,000	76,000 4,000 3,000 11,000 25,000 2,000 5,000	66,000 5,000 6,000 19,000 76,000 7,000 10,000	141,000 14,000 11,000 34,000 130,000 7,000 25,000	14,000 2,000 1,000 4,000 15,000 3,000 3,000	196,000 17,000 11,000 33,000 142,000 4,000 27,000	1,219,000 62,000 56,000 119,000 244,000 100,000 38,000	5,117,000 247,000 442,000 998,000 454,000 40,000 77,000 147,000 4,000
Total Optg. Rev. Deductions	10,518,000	316,000	126,000	190,000	363,000	42,000	431,000		7,526,000
Net Operating Revenues	216,000	24,000	3,000	21,000		(32,000)		153,000	(82,000)
Income Tax	(46,000)	(7,000)	(3,000)	(4,000)		(20,000)		107,000	(150,000)
Net Income After Taxes	262,000	31,000	6,000	25,000	22,000	(12,000)	109,000	44,000	68,000

(Red Figure)

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A. 54601 ei Applicant claims that the separated intrastate operating results demonstrate that its intrastate California public message service is not burdened by applicant's other intrastate California service offerings. Applicant also claims that in-depth econometric analyses of its telegram services indicate that the service is price inelastic and that the proposed rate revisions will result in additional revenues to the company. Based on its 1974 forecast applicant, on January 21, 1975, filed a "Motion for Ex Parte Order". It seeks the following increases: Telegrams from \$2.63 plus nine cents per extra word for 16 to 50 words and six cents per word for over 50 words to \$3.75, 12 cents and eight cents, respectively. Overnight telegrams from \$1.30 for 100 words or less and one cent for each additional word, to \$3.00 and three cents per extra word. Personal opinion messages to public officials from 90 cents to \$2.00 with telephone acceptance charges for such messages eliminated. Collect service from 10 to 50 cents per message and message delivery from 75 cents to \$3.00. Other Charges Telephone acceptance charges from 5.3 cents per message to 20 cents and messenger pickup from 5.3 cents per message to \$3.00 for all messages picked up in a single call. -4An engineer from the Commission's staff conducted an independent study of applicant's request. The results of the engineer's study are contained in a report dated January 6, 1975. The report is received as Exhibit 1. The staff engineer concluded that the estimated rate of return, without elasticity, of 2.5 percent, as indicated in his summary of earnings study, was not unreasonable after conferring with the Finance and Accounts Division, and thus applicant's request would not be opposed by the staff.

The following table from Exhibit 1 shows the figures upon which the staff engineer based his conclusion.

A. 54601 ei The Western Union Telegraph Company California Intrastate SUMMARY OF EARNINGS Communication Services Year 1974 Estimated at Proposed Rates Zero Elasticity 2/ : Company Exceeds Staff:

74	: 2/	: 1/2/	: Company	Exceeds Staff
Item_	: Staff ² /	Company 1/2/	: Amount	: Ratio
	(Do	llars in Thouse	inds)	
Operating Revenues				
Operating Revenues	\$11,990	\$12,291	\$301	2.51%
Less Uncollectibles	174	172	(2)	(<u>1.15</u>)
Total Operating Revenues	11,816	12,119	303	2.56
Operating Expenses		·		
Departmental	7,499	7,690	191	2.55
General & Administrative	383	392	79	2-35
Real Estate	595	604	ģ	1-51
Pensions, Benefits, FICA Tax	1,366	1,386	z ó	1-46
Depreciation	1,149	1,184	35	3.05
Depreciation Adjustment	(51)		<u>51</u>	(100.00)
Adjusted Depreciation	1,098	1,184	86	7.83
Amortization	135	170	35	25.93
Miscellaneous Taxes	192	198	6	
Insurance	13	10	_	3-13
Taxes Based on Income	107	85	(3) (22)	(23.08)
Total Operating Expenses	11,388	11,719	331	(20.56) 2.91
Net Operating Revenues	428	400	(28)	(6-54)
ross Rate Base	24,389	25,021	632	2-59
Reserve	7,208	7,513	305	4-23
Reserve Adjustment	(245)	79747	245	(100.00)
Reserve Adjusted	_6,963	<u>_7,513</u>	550	•
Adjusted Rate Base	17,426	17,508	<u>550</u> 82	-7.9 0.47
Rate of Return	2.5%	2-3/3/		(0.2)

(Red Figure)

- From company's work paper submitted to staff under "Black Cover" and titled "Estimated 1974 Intrastate Operating Results (With proposed PMS rate increase without shrinkage) Western Union Method". Staff added \$99,000 to company operating revenues and the related income tax to adjust miscalculation in company work papers.
- 2/ Does not include Mailgram which company considered wholly interstate.
- 3/ Calculated by staff.

A. 54601 ei Findings and Conclusion The Commission finds that: 1. Applicant is in need of additional revenues in the amount of \$1,173,169 and the proposed rates set forth in the application are reasonable. 2. Applicant's 1974 estimates reasonably indicate the results of its operations for the future and are adopted. 3. The increases in rates and charges authorized herein are justified; the rates and charges authorized herein are reasonable; and the present rates and charges, insofar as they differ from those prescribed herein, are for the future unjust and unreasonable. 4. Applicant has been authorized by Commission Resolution to discontinue its singing greeting service; therefore, no action is required in this proceeding. 5. A public hearing is not required. The Commission concludes that the application should be granted to the extent set forth in the order which follows. ORDER IT IS ORDERED that after the effective date of this order, The Western Union Telegraph Company is authorized to file the revised rate schedules attached to this order as Appendix A, and concurrently to withdraw and cancel the corresponding presently effective schedules. Such filing shall comply with General Order No. 96-A. The effective -7A. 54601 ei

date of the revised schedules shall be four days after the date of filing. The revised schedules shall apply only to service rendered on and after the effective date thereof.

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

Dated at Sun Francisco, California, this 25th

MARCH, 1975.

Remark Commissioners

schedules.

Personal Opinion Message Service is available from all Western Union offices in California as listed in the Preliminary Statement of the tariff schedules.

RATES

(1) Basis of Computing Charges:

The rate for a telegram between any two Western Union points in this State, referred to in the section of this tariff captioned "Preliminary Statement", is dependent upon the number of words in the message. A basic charge applies for 15 words or less in the case of a Telegram and for 100 words or less in the case of an Overnight Telegram. Words in excess of 15 words in the case of a Telegram, and in excess of 100 words in the case of an Overnight Telegram, are charged for at additional word rates. The rates are set forth in (2) following.

(2) Telegram Services:

For 15 words or less	\$3.75
For each additional word between 16 and 50 words	.12
For each additional word over 50 words	-08

(3) Overnight Telegram Service:

For 100 words or less	3.00
For each additional word over 100 words	-03

(4) Additional Charges:

- (a) A charge of 50¢ applies on each collect message other than a Press message.
- (b) A charge of 20g applies on each prepaid message, other than a Press message, filed with the Utility over telephone company exchange lines or over the Utility's own coin box telephones.

(Continued)

APPENDIX A Page 2 of 15

MESSAGE TELEGRAPH SERVICES

I. PUBLIC MESSAGES

RATES - (Continued)

- (4) Additional Charges: (Continued)
 - (c) A charge of 50% applies for each confirmation copy of a message filed with the Utility by telephone and furnished to the sender by mail upon request.
 - (d) A charge of \$3.00 applies for the physical delivery of a telegram to an addressee within the established city or community limits of an office or agency of the Utility listed in the Preliminary Statement when the sender specifies that delivery service by messenger be provided.
 - (e) A pickup charge of \$3.00 applies on one or more messages picked up by the Utility's messenger from a customer on a single call.
- (5) Personal Opinion Messages:

For each Personal Opinion Message, a flat rate of \$2.00 applies from any Western Union office in California to Sacramento, California.

(6) Tieline Service:

Equipment	Hate Per Month
Teleprinter, each unit	\$12.00 \$.00
<u>-</u>	Amount Per Month
Minimum billing including message charges, and tieline	*
equipment charges, per tieline	15.00
	Charge
Each relocation of equipment on same premises	7-50

APPENDIX A Page 3 of 15

MESSAGE TELEGRAPH SERVICES

I. PUBLIC MESSACES

SPECIAL CONDITIONS - (Continued)

- 8. <u>Tieline Service</u>: (Continued)
 - 1. A nonrecurring charge as set forth in RATES preceding applies for each relocation of a tieline connection in the same premises, when made at the customer's request.
 - g. Except as otherwise provided in this schedule, the furnishing of tieline connections is subject to a minimum "paid here" telegraph message revenue guarantee for each tieline. The fixed monthly charge provided for in (6) under RATES preceding is credited toward the \$15.00 monthly minimum revenue per tieline, and if this minimum amount is not reached in any monthly billing period, the applicable billing for that month will be at the rate of \$15.00 per tieline.
 - h. The minimum revenue guarantee provided for in (6) under PATES preceding, is applied on an individual customer basis in each city. For the purpose of applying this regulation, all paid here telegraph message revenue billed to a tieline customer in each city is credited toward the minimum revenue guarantee, whether the message traffic involved is or is not transmitted over the customer's tieline connection or connections. Such revenue includes the paid here revenue on all intra-U.S. telegraph message traffic both intrastate and interstate, also traffic to and from Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and St. Pierre-Miquelon Islands, international overseas and shore-ship traffic, and Commercial News quotation and sports services by message.
 - i. When fractional monthly billing periods are involved, as in the case of a customer whose tieline is installed or discontinued other than at the beginning or end of a monthly billing period, the fixed monthly charges and revenue guarantee specified in (6) under RATES are prorated as follows:

(Continued)

APPENDIX A Page 4 of 15

MESSAGE TELEGRAPH SERVICES

I. PUBLIC MESSAGES

SPECIAL CONDITIONS - (Continued)

8. Tieline Service: (Continued)

	Tieline Co	onnection	<u>Minimum</u>
Fractional Period	Teleprinter	Other Than Teleprinter	Revenue Guarantee
1-10 days 11-20 days Over 20 days	\$ 4.00 8.00 12.00	\$2.70 5.40 8.00	\$ 5.00 10.00 15.00

j. The fixed monthly charge and the minimum monthly revenue guarantee are inapplicable in those instances where the tieline connection is also used for and in connection with Telex Service, as set forth in the Utility's Schedule Cal. P.U.C. No. 7-T.

A message addressed to a court or judge which shows on its face that it is or may be intended to influence the decision in a matter pending before the court will not be sent out for delivery. Upon receipt of such a message, the clerk of the court, or other suitable officer, will be called by telephone, told that we have a message apparently intended to influence the court's decision in a pending matter and asked for his suggestion as to its disposition. If he requests that the text and signature be read to him or delivery made, this will be done. If delivery is not requested, the message will be filed but the sender need not be notified. In all such cases, whether delivery is made or not, a record should be kept of the conversation with the court clerk, or other official, and what directions are received from him.

(Continued)

APPENDIX A
Page 11 of 15

MESSAGE TELEGRAPH SERVICES

V. RULES

VII. MISCELLANEOUS - (Continued)

F. Priority Order of Handling Messages

The use and restoration of service shall be in accordance with Part 64, Subpart D of the Federal Communications Commission's Rules and Regulations, which specifies the priority system for such activities.

APPENDIX A Page 12 of 15

MONEY ORDER SERVICES

I. RECULAR MONEY ORDERS

APPLICABILITY

This section contains the rates and conditions applicable to money order service, whereby arrangements are made by telegraph for the payment to a designated payee, usually at a distant point, of a sum of money deposited at an office of the Utility by the sender.

TERRITORY

Service is available between offices operated directly by the Utility.

RATES

The charge for a money order, including the message of instruction to the paying office, is as follows when the money order draft or the money itself is to be called for at the Utility office or agency:

(a) Money Order Charges:

Amount of Order	Charge
	\$ 4.70 5.65
100.01 to 300.00	7.90 12.25
Each additional \$5	·

A supplementary message may be included in either service, the charge for which is at the additional word rate shown in the tariff schedules.

APPENDIX A Page 14 of 15

TEL(T)EX SERVICE

APPLICABILITY

This schedule contains the rates and conditions applicable to Tel(T)ex Service.

TERRITORY

Tel(T)ex Service is available for intrastate service within this State from all Telex subscriber stations connected to Telex Service exchanges of the Utility in the cities set forth in the Telex Service Schedule 7-T to addresses in the cities listed below:

Beverly Hills
Burlingame
Huntington Fark
Los Angeles
Oakland
Palo Alto
Pasadena
Sacramento
San Diego
San Francisco

RATES

The charges applicable to Tel(T)ex Service are determined as follows:

- (a) The usage charges prescribed in paragraph (3)(b) under. RATES in the Telex Service Schedule 7-T apply for the Telex call from the Telex subscriber to the Utility's office in the destination city, plus
- (b) A flat charge of \$3.00 for each message transmitted by Telex to the Utility for delivery in the destination city.

APPENDIX A Page 15 of 15

TEL(T)EX SERVICE

CONDITIONS - (Continued)

- 4. Plain language, abbreviations, code, cipher, and word or character spacings may be used in message texts in any combination permitted by the nature of the Telex subscriber's station equipment. However, message texts which are obscene, profane or defamatory, and those for the purpose of placing a wager will not be accepted, and the provisions with respect thereto contained in paragraphs L.l and L.7 under ACCEPTANCE OF MESSAGES in the Message Telegraph Services Schedule 2-T will apply.
- 5. Delivery to the addressees of Tel(T)ex messages will be made by messenger, by tieline, by telephone, at the option of the sender, in the same manner as Telegrams, set forth in paragraphs B.l and B.2 under DELIVERY OF MESSAGES in the Message Telegraph Services Schedule 2-T.
- 6. If the Telex subscriber desires a report of delivery of a Tel(T)ex message, the words "REPORT DELIVERY" shall be transmitted by the subscriber immediately after the name of the addressee in the address of such message. The Utility will respond to such request by sending a collect telegram to the Telex subscriber stating the time the Tel(T)ex message was delivered to the addressee.
- 7. If a message cannot be delivered, the Telex subscriber will be notified of the nondelivery and of the reason therefor. No charge will be made for the advice of nondelivery, but the charges paid by the Telex subscriber for the undelivered message will not be canceled or refunded, unless the Utility's service is found to have been at fault. If nondelivery is due to an incorrect address and the Telex subscriber desires to have delivery made to the correct address, he is required to transmit, at his expense, a new message or a service message giving the new address.