

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 90431 JUN 19 1979

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

C.A.U.S.E.,

Complainant,

vs.

PACIFIC TELEPHONE AND
TELEGRAPH COMPANY,

Defendant.

Case No. 10687
(Filed November 3, 1978)

Linda A. Schmidt, Attorney at Law, and
Burt Wilson, for complainant.
Margaret Brown, Attorney at Law,
for defendant.

O P I N I O N

Complainant, Campaign Against Utility Service Exploitation (CAUSE), seeks an order enjoining and restraining defendant, The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (Pacific), from any further action toward consolidating the various repair centers within the Los Angeles metropolitan area until such consolidation can be effected without impairing service and, further, to require Pacific to reestablish repair facilities in those areas where service has been routed to the central location until such time as the consolidation can be effected without impairing the quality of service provided by Pacific.

Public hearing was held before Administrative Law Judge N. R. Johnson in Los Angeles on February 1, 1979, and the matter was submitted. Testimony was presented on behalf of CAUSE by its coordinator Burt Wilson; by four of Pacific's

customers, Messrs. Fleischer, Nagengast, and Roberts, and Mrs. Mary Rogers; and by three of Pacific's employees appearing as adverse witnesses under Section 776 of the Evidence Code: Messrs. Gary McBee, district manager of the Los Angeles Sector of the Automated Repair Service Bureau; Stan Daniel, presently division manager, supplies administration, and prior to October 1, 1978 division manager, installation and repair, Valley Division; and L. R. Ward, department manager, residence service centers, and general manager of the Los Angeles North Area. Testimony was presented on behalf of Pacific by Mr. McBee.

Background Information

Customers of Pacific who experience difficulties with the operation of their telephones dial 611 for telephone repair service. There are approximately 3,000,000 such calls a year in the Los Angeles Sector out of a total of approximately six billion calls a year in this sector.

Prior to June 1978 such repair calls were answered in local Repair Service Bureaus (RSB) during busy hours and in a Centralized Overnight Trouble Reporting Center (Night Service Center) during the off-busy hours. When a service call is received at an RSB, the repair clerk fills out a mark sense trouble ticket requiring a minimum of 60 entries per report. After termination of the call, the clerk searches for line records with cable and facility information and then forwards such information together with the trouble ticket to the RSB tester. The tester analyzes the trouble report and facility information and takes appropriate action such as performing line tests or forwarding the trouble report to a dispatcher for assignment to a repair person in the field. The repair person clears the trouble and reports the trouble status back to the dispatcher

who then processes the report. During the off-busy hours the Night Service Center clerk fills out a trouble ticket and forwards it to the RSB for processing during normal working hours, as described above.

Commencing in June 1978 Pacific started instituting its Automated Repair Service Bureau (ARSB). ARSB consists of four related subsystems as follows:

1. TREAT - Trouble Report Evaluation and Analysis Tool
2. LMOS - Loop Maintenance Operation System
3. MLT - Mechanized Loop Testing
4. CRSAB - Centralized Repair Service Attendant Bureau

TREAT, currently in operation throughout Pacific's system, provides trouble report information to the RSBs for use as an analytical tool to discern trouble patterns and potential telephone facility problem areas.

LMOS is a computerized data base that stores basic line record, cable book, and plant card data in a computer system in Buena Park for southern California and in Concord for northern California.

The MLT is a system for automatic subscriber line testing that can test a subscriber line as the Repair Service Attendant (RSA) is conversing with the subscriber. The first installation of such a testing system is scheduled to be installed for Pacific in the first quarter of 1980.

There are to be four CRSABs in Pacific's system located in North Hollywood, Buena Park, Sunnyvale, and Sacramento. The CRSAB serving the Los Angeles Sector is located at 11270 Magnolia Boulevard. As of February 1, 1979 nine of the 39

sector exchanges have been converted to CRSAB. In addition, the Night Service Center serving all of the Los Angeles Sector has been moved from Burbank to the North Hollywood address.

The RSAs utilize Visual Display Terminals (VDT) to interface with the LMOS system. Upon receipt of a trouble call the RSA will enter the trouble described into the LMOS which will create a Basic Output Report (BOR) that provides basic subscriber line information, describes the current trouble reported, provides appointment and access information, lists customers' special requests, lists associated telephone equipment on the telephone line, and contains a 40-day trouble history. The BOR is then sent to the screener, tester, or dispatcher for appropriate action. The status of the trouble is entered into the data base using the VDT.

The routing for CRSAB calls is as follows:

- a. When a cross-bar or step-by-step call originates the 611 call, it is switched to the nearest Electronic Switching Station (ESS) office, converted to a seven-digit number, switched via the metro network to the Sherman Oaks ESS office, and trunked to the CRSAB location in North Hollywood.
- b. When an ESS call originates the 611 call, it is converted to a seven-digit number and transmitted to the CRSAB location in North Hollywood via the Sherman Oaks ESS office, as described above.

The BORs are transmitted to the local RSBs via data links.

CAUSE's Position

Testimony presented on behalf of CAUSE indicated that:

1. On the Labor Day weekend the repair circuits were overloaded and Pacific abandoned approximately 10,000 customer trouble reports.
2. Pacific's conversion to CRSAB has resulted in deterioration of service contrary to the provisions of this Commission's General Order No. 133, particularly Section 3.4 relating to customer trouble reports and Section 3.6 relating to dial service.
3. CAUSE has received about 30 to 40 complaints relating to repair service.
4. Mr. Wilson has been experiencing great difficulty in completing calls since September 1978.
5. It took from January to April 1978 to eliminate line static from a telephone in Tehachapi.
6. It is necessary to call repair service numerous times before a defective telephone will be repaired.
7. Some telephone personnel refused to identify themselves when questioned, but would reply with such answers as Operator 37 or Mr. X.
8. Pacific's representative would inform subscriber that it was necessary for him to stay home all day to have his telephone repaired and then call about 10 a.m. and report the trouble cleared.
9. Telephone service began to deteriorate about July 1978.
10. In the evenings, it takes several hours to get through to repair service by dialing 611.

11. On January 22, 1979 a subscriber who dialed 611 would hear two or three rings before the phone switched to an all-circuits busy signal.

12. The utilization of the metropolitan network to transfer 611 calls to the North Hollywood CRSAB ties up lines that could otherwise be used for subscriber calls with the result that Pacific's facilities become overloaded.

Pacific's Position

Testimony and exhibits presented on behalf of Pacific indicated that:

1. There has been a serious 611 overflow problem in the evenings for some time which was caused by under-estimating both the volume of trouble calls and the amount of time required to complete the calls.

2. The estimated time to complete a 611 call was 100 seconds, whereas actual time ranges around 150 to 170 seconds.

3. Since September 1978 Pacific has increased the number of RSAs on the evening shift from 14 to 36 and thereby substantially improved telephone repair service.

4. At the present time there are no overflow calls on 611 repair service calls except during rainy weather.

5. During rainy weather the number of repair service calls increase to two or three times its normal volume.

6. The 611 repair calls represent approximately .05 percent of calls placed in the Los Angeles Sector and cannot conceivably overload Pacific's facilities.

7. The Labor Day 1978 overflow of 10,000 calls was due to increased volume of repair calls caused by rainy weather and inadequate staffing due to underestimating volume and duration of repair calls.

8. The accessibility and use of testing equipment in RSBs is unaffected by conversion to CRSAB.

9. The benefits to Pacific and its subscribers resulting from the implementation of ARSB are:

- a. 611 repair calls will be handled by expert clerks with no responsibilities other than processing of customer calls as contrasted with non-ARSB bureaus which require clerks to perform other functions in addition to processing customer calls.
- b. Customer records will be updated and corrected.
- c. Data available to on-line RSB personnel not available on non-converted bureaus.
- d. Improved record availability.
- e. Improved customer on-line testing.

10. Pacific has increased the current positions in CRSAB from 20 to 38 as of December 30, 1978 and has plans for an additional expansion to 62 positions by April 1979.

11. Pacific's subscribers' difficulties in completing 611 trouble calls during normal work hours for those offices converted to the ARSB system were primarily associated with the time delay encountered in hiring and training new personnel. Pacific presently plans to overstaff new exchanges to be converted and delay the conversions of such exchanges until the requisite staffing is available.

Discussion

The primary controversy in this proceeding is whether or not Pacific's current program of incorporating its exchanges into CRSAB will result in a deterioration of service, as alleged by CAUSE, or will result in improved and more responsive service, as alleged by Pacific. It is obvious

from the record that since the inception of CRSAB in June 1978, Pacific has been beset by numerous unanticipated complications which, coupled with unseasonal weather and other factors, resulted in its customers experiencing great difficulty in getting telephone repairs effected within a reasonable time frame.

Pacific originally understaffed its CRSAB operation as a result of underestimating both the volume of calls and the average time required to complete each call. Pacific's present plans provide for a total of 114 CRSAB positions for the Los Angeles Sector as contrasted to the 48 positions originally contemplated.

According to the record, all off-normal work hour telephone trouble calls have been centralized since 1976, first at Burbank and then at North Hollywood. It was not until 1978, however, that equipment was installed which could measure the overflow calls that were abandoned. This equipment indicated a serious deficiency in the number of RSAs on the evening shift. To counteract this deficiency Pacific increased the number of RSAs on the evening shift from 14 to 34 with the result that, according to Pacific's witness, there are presently no overflow calls except during rainy weather when the volume of trouble calls doubles or triples.

The two most significant problem days discussed on the record were the Labor Day weekend of 1978 when approximately 10,000 calls were abandoned and January 22, 1979 when a person dialing 611 would hear two rings and then get an all-circuits busy signal. The former was reportedly caused by a substantial increase in the volume of calls due to unseasonable rain storms coupled with previously discussed understaffing caused by

underestimating both the amount of time required for the completion of each call and the volume of calls. The January 22, 1979 problem was reportedly caused by a temporary telephone in the Night Service Center being left in an "on" position when it was unattended. The uniform call distributor would hit the "open" position and when it was not answered, it would ring back to an all-circuits busy signal. As previously stated, the number of RSAs has been substantially increased which should preclude a recurrence of a substantial overflow problem, such as experienced on the Labor Day weekend of 1978, and arrangements have been made to periodically check the position of the manual switches on the temporary phones which should prevent a recurrence of the type of problem experienced on January 22, 1979.

According to the record, 611 call access problems experienced during normal work hours on the ARSB system related to the time delay experienced in hiring and training new personnel. Pacific currently plans to delay the conversion of any more exchanges until an adequate number of trained personnel are available. Such a procedure can be expected to avoid such problems in the future.

Findings

1. Pacific is in the process of converting exchanges in the Los Angeles Sector to CRSAB.
2. As of February 1, 1979, 11 of the 39 exchanges have been converted to CRSAB.
3. The Night Service Center was substantially understaffed as a result of Pacific's underestimating both the volume of 611 repair calls and the time required to complete each call.

4. Pacific has substantially increased the number of CRSAB positions and will further increase this number so as to be in a position to adequately respond to 611 repair calls.

5. Because the number of 611 repair calls is relatively insignificant when compared to the number of calls originating in the Los Angeles Sector, the conversion to CRSAB will not overload Pacific's facilities.

6. The out-of-normal working hours repair calls have been centralized in one location since 1976.

7. Initial problems associated with conversion to CRSAB, relating to lack of adequately trained personnel at time of conversion, should be mitigated by withholding further conversion of individual exchanges until such time as an adequate number of trained personnel is available.

8. The conversion of Pacific's exchanges to CRSAB as presently planned should not cause a deterioration in the quality of repair service provided by Pacific.

The Commission concludes that the relief requested should be denied.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that the relief requested is denied.
The effective date of this order shall be thirty days
after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 19th
day of JUNE 4, 1979.

Albert E. Byrne
President
Charles W. Howell
Clair T. DeLoach
Howard W. Tamm
Commissioners