

PROCEEDINGS.
INDEX OF WITNESSES
BEFORE THE
INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

Frank L. Ostler,	3	X
J. W. Tribble,	4	7
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Frank Pingree, Salt Lake City, Utah, November 16, 1932.

10:00 a. m.

BEFORE

INDEX OF EXHIBITS

Applicant's No. 1, Witness Ostler,	4
E. E. CORFMAN, THOMAS E. MCKAY and GEORGE F. MCGONAGLE	
Commissioners, Public Utilities Commission of Utah.	7
Protestant's " 3, " Roberts,	37
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APPEARANCES:

SESSION

N. H. LOOMIS and J. M. SOUBY, 1416 Dodge Street, Omaha, Nebraska, and GEORGE H. SMITH and L. H. ANDERSON, 10 South Main Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, appearing for applicant.

J. H. ROBERTS, Coalville, Utah, and FRANK PINGREE, 8th Avenue and C Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, appearing for protestant, Grass Creek Fuel Company.

For the original, but copies of the original.
(The copy of Return to Questionnaire was the original marked Applicant's Exhibit No. 1, Witness Ostler.)

These pages were a small part of a larger document of testimonies given at the abandonment hearing for the Grass Creek Branch, and were copied at the Utah State Archives in September 1987 from files that were indexed as "ICC Files."

you prepared?

A Yes sir.

Q It was prepared under your supervision?

A Yes sir.

Q Is it correct?

A It is.

Q State briefly just what that exhibit covers?

A That covers the number of cars and tons of commercial coal shipped from the Grass Creek Branch.

Q During what period?

A That is for the years 1927 to 1931, inclusive, and ten months, January 1st to October 31st, 1932, inclusive.

Mr. Anderson: We offer Applicant's exhibit 2 in evidence.

Com. Corfman: If there is no objection, the offer will be received.

(The statement previously marked "Applicant's Exhibit No. 2, Witness Tribble, for identification," was received in evidence and is forwarded herewith.)

Q (By Mr. Anderson) Mr. Tribble, calling your attention to this exhibit, can you state for 1927 the total number of cars shipped from Grass Creek?

A Two hundred and seven cars.

Q That is an average of how many per month?

A Of approximately seventeen per month.

Q About a half a car per day?

A About a half a car per day.

Q What have you to say with respect to the year 1928?

A A total of three hundred thirty-five cars shipped, which is an average of twenty-eight cars per month; that is less than one car per day.

Q And in 1929?

A A total of two hundred ten cars shipped, an average of eighteen per month, less than one car per day.

Q And 1930?

A A total of three hundred fifty-three cars, an average of twenty-nine per month, and about one per day.

Q In 1931?

A A total of two hundred forty-three cars, an average of twenty cars per month, less than one per day.

Q And this exhibit for 1932 covers the first ten months of 1932?

A That is one hundred thirty cars, that is about thirteen per month, an average of thirteen per month, less than one per day.

Q I notice in this exhibit, Mr. Tribble, there are some months not shown; what does that indicate?

A That there were no shipments made during those months.

Q Referring now, Mr. Tribble, to the accumulated deficit of some forty thousand dollars you have testified about, what effect would continued operation of the Branch have upon other

A Almost directly south, yes sir.

Q How far is Grass Creek Junction from Coalville, Utah?

A It is 2.3 miles.

Q What is the length of the Grass Creek Branch?

A 5.59 miles.

Q That represents the distance from Grass Creek Junction to Grass Creek proper?

A Yes sir.

Q The length of the line?

A Yes sir.

Q Do you know whether or not that also represents the total miles of track on the Branch?

A No sir; there are .46 miles of side tracks.

Q By "side tracks", what do you mean?

A Mine tracks and tipple tracks at the mine.

Q There are no side tracks for trains to pass on between Grass Creek Junction and Grass Creek, are there?

A No sir.

Q About what is the grade of the Grass Creek Branch, from Grass Creek Junction to the end of the line?

A About 4 per cent, I think between three and four per cent. I don't know exactly, but it is in that neighborhood.

Q Does the Grass Creek Branch line parallel the main line running in an easterly direction?

A Yes sir.

top of the mine.

Q Do you know for what purpose this branch was originally constructed?

A It was originally constructed to serve the Grass Creek Coal Mine.

Q Do you know if anything else has developed since that time?

A No sir.

Q Other than the coal business?

A Nothing in the past thirty-five years.

Q Do you know who owns the coal properties?

A The coal property is owned by the Zions Securities Corporation.

Q Of Salt Lake City?

A Salt Lake City.

Q Do you know who the lessee of the mine is?

A The Grass Creek Fuel Company, Mr. J. H. Roberts, Manager.

Q What is your understanding as to the proposed abandonment of this mine?

A I understand development work ceased about fifteen months ago, and for some time they have been removing coal from the support pillars, preparatory to its abandonment.

Q Is there another coal branch running out of Coalville?

A Yes sir.

Q That is called what?

A That runs from Coalville up to the Weber Mine, about two

Q (By Com. Corfman) Give your full name.

A J. H. Roberts.

Q Where do you reside?

A At Coalville, Utah.

Q What is your business?

A Manager of the Grass Creek Fuel Company.

Q Now, you may proceed to make your statement?

A Operating the mine and the line in question, I want to say first of all, in fairness to Mr. Amos, that at the time he first spoke of this abandonment I told him that, under the conditions that existed at that time, we could not and would not offer any objections because the tonnage did not justify even operating. As a matter of fact, we had not operated the mine since March the 27th up to the time that Mr. Amos first spoke to me.

Q(Mr. Anderson) That was in July, about?

A That was the first part of July of this year; and during April we shipped one car of coal that had been loaded the last day we operated, and had made no further shipments during that time.

The coal in the Coalville District is of a very soft nature, and, like all other coals, has its peculiar characteristics. Coals, like men, have their place where they can make good and where they fail. The Coalville Coal is particularly adopted for use as powdered fuel, and is burned as such by

the Union Portland Cement Company at its plant at Devils Slide. On account of the softness of the coal, we have a very large percentage of slack coal, and on account of the large percentage of slack coal, even though the mining costs be as low as in most mines in other districts, the selling price for each size must be a little higher in order to equalize, or on an average selling price,

Let me state this, that if we get a bigger percentage of coal that sells at a very low price, and a smaller percentage of the higher priced grades, in order to meet the operating costs we must have a little higher price for each grade. The result is this, that the mine for many years has practically been limited on a tonnage basis to the slack consumption of the Union Portland Cement Company at Devils Slide.

From July the 1st, 1931, up to June the 1st of 1932, the Cement Company at Devils Slide did not operate. During that period of eleven months we were putting on the ground 40 per cent of our production, which was all of the slack. Then they commenced operation, and we were shipping them slack that had been produced during that time, and we had very little hope that it was going to last more than two or three months. Those were the conditions at the time that I told Mr. Amos that we could not or would not be justified in offering any resistance to the abandonment of the track. Since that time, as stated by Mr. Amos, to our happy surprise,

I might say, I might say the Union Portland Cement Company was able to secure a small portion of the cement requirements at the Boulder Dam, and instead of operating for two or three months, as the indications were at that time, they are still operating, and in all probability will have at least another two months, with the probability of securing possibly some additional business in connection with the Boulder Dam construction.

As stated by Mr. Amos, we have done no development work at the Grass Creek Mine for about fifteen months. During that time we have been extracting some pillars, hopeful that something would materialize where the Cement Company would be operating, and we could continue at least on a paying basis, and even better than that, because we are indebted to our workmen for wages. We are two months behind on their wages and other current accounts, as well as some indebtedness to the owners of the land which we are operating under a lease. We have left in that mine I would say conservatively one hundred sixty thousand tons of pillars in close proximity to the tibble. Some of them are quite large pillars, and the question might be raised, why were those pillars left there for so many years without extracting this cheap coal. The answer is that they were so situated in close proximity, in fact directly under the camp, the railroad tracks, and, of a necessity, they had to be left there until the final com-