BEFORE THE OIL CONSERVATION COMMISSION SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO AUGUST 10, 1960

EXAMINER HEARING

IN THE MATTER OF:

CASE 2047

Application of Tennessee Gas Transmission Company for an order force-pooling all mineral interests in a 320-acre gas unit in the West Kutz-Dakota Pool. Applicant, in the abovestyled cause, seeks an order force-pooling all: Dakota Producing Interval mineral interests in : the 320 acres comprising the W/2 of Section 27,: Township 29 North, Range 13 West, West Kutz-Dakota Pool, San Juan County, New Mexico. mineral interest owners in the said 320-acre tract include Hugh J. Mitchell, Raimonda Mitchell, Barbara Head Couturi, Robert H. Clifton,: Mildred C. Foutz, Dorothy C. Malloy, Martha Head, Lucy M. Marcelino, Hattie M. McClure, Willard H. Head, George J. Head, Helen C. Hayes,: Harry T. Head, Mary E. Hodgson, Dorothy G. Head,: Gladys Slaughter Smith, Frederick J. Head, Pan: American Petroleum Corporation, H. K. Riddle, Glenn H. Callow, Arnold E. Carle, Ivan Otstot and Mabel Otstot.

BEFORE:

Elvis A. Utz, Examiner

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MR. UTZ: Case 2047.

MR. PAYNE: Case 2047. Application of Tennessee Gas

Transmission Company for an order force-pooling all mineral inter-



ests in a 320-acre gas unit in the West Kutz-Dakota Pool.

MR. SETH: William Federici and Oliver Seth of Seth, Montgomery, Federici & Andrews, for Tennessee Gas Transmission Company. We have two witnesses, Mr. Jerry Lacey and Mr. Sanders.

(Witnesses sworn)

MR. UTZ: Any other appearances in this case?

JOHN J. LACEY,

called as a witness, having been previously sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. SETH:

- Q Will you state your name, please?
- A John J. Lacey.
- Q By whom are you employed?
- A Employed by an operating division of Tennessee Gas
 Transmission as district engineer in this district office in Durango, Colorado.
- Q You have previously testified before the New Mexico Oil Conservation Commission?
 - A Yes, I have.
- Q In your capacity with Tennessee Gas, are you familiar with the application in this case?
 - A Yes. I am.
 - Q Does the area in question come within your jurisdiction?



- Yes, it does. Α
- Would you state very briefly the purpose of the appli-Q cation?
- The purpose of the application is requesting a forced pooling of the west half of Section 27, 29 North, 13 West, San Juan County, New Mexico in order that we might have a full 320acre unit to drill a Dakota well.
 - Do you have a plat prepared that shows this? Q
 - Yes, I do. А
 - This area in question? Q
 - Yes, I do. Α

(Whereupon, Applicant's Exhibit 1 marked for identification.)

- Q Now, would you state for the Commission what this plat shows?
- This plat shows the location of the acreage under dis-Α cussion, and the west half of Section 27 is outlined in red.
- Would you state, please, the interest owners in this Q. west half, as you know them?
- 280 acres in the west half of Section 27 is a working interest of 7/8ths of Tennessee Gas and Oil Company, and 1/8th of Drilling Company. 40 acres in the northeast quarter Big Chief of the northwest quarter is a hundred percent working interest, Pan American Petroleum Corporation.
 - Do you know the royalty interests or other interests Q



in the Pan American portion, do you know the names of the parties?

- I don't know for sure. Α
- Have you been advised --
- Yes, I have. Α
- -- from whatever information is available as to Pan Q American's interest owners?
 - Yes. I have been advised.
- Would you state to the Commission who these interest owners are as you best know them?
- Well, the royalty interest owners under the acreage controlled by Tennessee Gas and Oil and Big Chief Drilling Company are Hugh J. Mitchell, Raimonda Mitchell, Barbara Head Couturi, Robert H. Clifton, Mildred C. Foutz, Dorothy C. Malloy, Martha Head, Lucy M. Marcelino, Hattie M. McClure, Willard H. Head, George J. Head, Helen C. Hayes, Harry T. Head, Mary E. Hodgson, Dorothy G. Head, Gladys Slaughter Smith, Frederick J. Head. The Pan American royalty interest under the 40 acres is H. K. Riddle, Glenn H. Callow, Arnold E. Carle, Ivan Otstot and Mabel Otstot.
- Q. Are you familiar with the spacing rules of the Commission for the Dakota interval in this area?
- Yes, I am. 320 acres, consisting of either two contiguous quarter sections of either the northerly half or south half or east half and west half of a governmental section.
- Under these existing rules, can a well be drilled on the Tennessee Gas Transmission tract in the west half?



- A No, it cannot. Tennessee's acreage in the west half of 27 consists of 280 acres.
 - Q That's too small a tract?
- A That's too small a tract to drill a Dakota well under the present spacing rules.
- Q With the addition of the Pan American tract, you will have a full 320, approximately?
- A Yes, within the tolerance of the governmental half sections.
 - Q That will be of sufficient size for a Dakota well?
 - A Yes.
- Q What type of well do you contemplate? Do you contemplate a single?
- A We contemplate drilling a Dakota single completion located approximately in the northwest quarter of Section 27.
- Q Do you expect, as best you know now, this entire west half to be productive of gas in the Dakota formation?
- A Yes, the entire west half of the Section 27 will be productive from the Dakota.
- Q In your opinion, if this application is not granted, will Tennessee Gas Transmission be prevented from securing its fair share of oil and gas?
- A Yes, it will, because we will be unable to drill a well in the west half of Section 27 and drain the acreage.
 - Q Is the Dakota gas prorated at the present time?



A No, at the present time the Dakota gas is not prorated by the Commission but is subject to pipeline prorationing by the purchaser of the gas.

Q In the event the application is granted, do you have any recommendations as to how this should be prorated between the Pan American and Tennessee Gas?

A Since all the acreage is productive, I would recommend it be prorated on the basis of surface acreage contributed to the 320-acre drilling unit proportionately, 1/8th and 7/8ths.

MR. SETH: That's all the direct examination. We would like, if we may have permission, to recall the witness at the conclusion of Mr. Sanders' testimony.

MR. PAYNE: Your other witness will testify as to the efforts of communitization?

MR. SETH: Yes, he will. We wanted to get this first.

MR. PAYNE: All right.

WILL SAMDERS, JR.,

called as a witness, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. FEDERICI:

Q Will you state your name?

A Will Sanders, Jr., Denver, Colorado. I'm the division attorney for Rocky Mountain area of Tennessee Gas Transmission Company.



- Have you appeared before the Commission as a witness? Q
- Never as a witness. I have appeared as counsel. Α
- Will you state your educational background and some of Q. your experience?
- I am a graduate of Denver University Law School Α I practiced oil and gas law most exclusively for thirteen years, five years with Continental Oil Company. General attorney for Bay Petroleum Corporation, which was purchased by Tennessee Gas some five and a half years ago, and have remained as their division attorney in the Rocky Mountain area.
- During that period of time, have you drafted operating agreements, and communitization agreements, and pooling agreements?
 - Considerable number, yes. Α
- What is your present occupation? By whom are you employed presently?
 - Tennessee Gas Transmission. Α
- MR. FEDERICI: Are the witness qualifications acceptable?
 - MR. UTZ: The witness is qualified as a legal witness.
- (By Mr. Federici) Will you state to the Commission the negotiations and attempts by Tennessee Gas Transmission Company to enter into operating agreements or similar agreements with Pan American Petroleum Corporation?
- In the summer of 1959 it became obvious that the well under discussion to be located in the west half of Section 27.



Township 29 North, Range 13 West was a development well and should be drilled and produced as such from the Dakota formation. therefore, contacted the other working interest owners in regard to an operating agreement and an appropriate communitization agreement as to enable us to continue this drilling program. September of 1959 both Big Chief Drilling Company and Pan American agreed that they would drill the said well, and Pan American asked that we submit to them an operating agreement and communitization agreement, which we did submit in rough. After considerable negotiation, we submitted to them under date of January 22, 1960 communitization agreement and an operating agreement. after their receipt thereof, they informed us by telegram, a copy of which I have with me, that due to their policies, a management policy, they did not intend to produce any Dakota gas unless it was absolutely necessary, and, therefore, could not agree to the drilling of this well. After considerable further negotiations and contacting and trips to Fort Worth and Farmington by our people from various segments of our organization, the Pan American people did execute an operating agreement, which was returned to us in May of this year, which operating agreement did strike therefrom the provision which allows the operator, which is Tennessee Gas in this situation, to sell the gas in the event that any of the non-operators do not have a market or have not made some arrangements by which they could market their gas during the thirtyday period, which sale of the gas would be on the same basis as



obtained by the operator. This agreement was submitted with a letter in which they also informed us that in the event that we did market any of their gas we would be held liable to them for conversion. It put us in the position of not being able to drill the well and market the gas for fear of marketing Pan American's gas and being held liable for conversion. That is basically the situation as it stands at this point.

Q Did you subsequently submit an amending agreement, or was that prior thereto?

A We then did draft an agreement after certain other negotiations, which is in the nature of a split-stream type of agreement by which both parties could market their gas under different periods, and in the event that Pan American did not desire to market its gas in the near future, they would be allowed to take a greater proportion at a later date made up from Big Chief's and Tennessee's portion of the gas. However, the agreement did provide therein that each party would indemnify the other party in the event that the reservoir would be depleted prior to the time that each party would have obtained his proportionate share therefrom because of lack of reservoir pressure or destruction of the reservoir, or collapsing of casing, any other reason that might be cause for ceasing of the flow of the gas.

Q Was that acceptable?

A No, it was not, because they decided, as before, that they just didn't care to market their gas on any arrangement in the



near future.

Q Are these agreements which you submitted to Pan American the usual and customary type used in the oil and gas industry?

A Well, the communitization agreement certainly is. The operating agreement was on our usual form, and it is a type of agreement as to the pertinent portions with which we're concerned here, which provides that the operator will operate the properties that the parties thereto might take the product in kind, and provides out of necessity that in the event that a non-operator does not desire to take his product in kind, that the operator will be allowed to dispose of it under the terms, under the same terms and conditions as it disposes of its own products for short intervals, which can be recurring intervals, so as to make possible the marketing of the product.

Q Did the negotiations and agreements contain some provision for reimbursement costs?

A Yes, the usual accounting procedures attach to the operating agreement, and, as such, is ever in dispute.

Q In fact, that was attached to the agreement?

A Was attached to the agreement, and apparently agreed to by Pan American. As I say, they apparently have signed the operating agreement, a copy of which I have here, and only struck out the provision concerning our marketing of the gas during these periods, and initially, it would appear they had agreed to all of the other terms and conditions contained therein.



- Q What was that method of reimbursement, I mean by time period?
 - A We -- you mean reimbursement to them?
 - Q Well, costs.
- A For all drilling and operating costs, why, they'll be submitted during the following month and billed and paid at that time, by the 20th of the succeeding month.
- Q In your opinion, should a provision for that be included in the order?
- A I believe some provision for reimbursement for costs should be included in the order.
- Q In your opinion and from your experience as to what is customary, who do you believe should be designated operator?
- A I believe Tennessee Gas Transmission Company, being the largest owner of the working interest in the drilling unit, should be the operator.
- Q In your opinion, is the forced pooling the only reasonable method of operating for this particular unit?
- A It would appear, from our knowledge of the statute, that it would either have to be forced pooling or a non-standard unit. We would prefer a non-standard unit. We are not submitting that as a proposal, as such, at this time, but we would like the Commission to consider it if it could possibly be arranged. We're perfectly willing to take only 7/8ths allocation from the unit and allow the other 1/8th to remain in the ground, if necessary, so as to



enable us to get the 7/8ths out.

Q Under a forced pooling order, would you propose to sell the gas, account for the proportionate shares of the gas?

A Under the same terms and agreements as we would sell our own gas to the only line that can hook up to this particular field.

Q In your opinion, should the order contain such a provision?

A I would believe so, due to the fact that, as we all know, the sale of gas into Interstate Commerce can only be accomplished as a result of obtaining a Certificate of Necessity from the Federal Power Commission, and the Federal Power Commission has jurisdiction over all gas sales. So, therefore, the only way we can sell the gas is to obtain such a certificate.

In your opinion, without a forced pooling order and in the absence of an operating agreement, would Tennessee Gas Transmission be able to fully recover all its fair share of the oil or gas in the pool?

obtain its fair and equitable share of the gas from this pool, due to the fact that we have been threatened with a suit which will, in essence, charge us with conversion and make us liable for any gas taken from the reservoir which might be the property of Pan American or their royalty or overriding royalty interest owners. That makes it impossible for us to determine at just which point



in the operation of this well we have left in the ground a sufficient amount of gas backed up by a sufficient amount of pressure to afford Pan American the opportunity of receiving its just and equitable share. Therefore, the only way that both parties can receive their just and equitable share from this well is to simultaneously produce at the same rate and other than that—understand, I am not an engineer, of course, but Mr. Lacey will testify further in regard to this matter.—there is no known definite method by which we can determine when Pan American's share is in the ground, and only that share plus the reservoir energy that will push it out.

Q I think you have probably answered this, but I'll ask you if, in your opinion, would a forced pooling order afford to Tennessee Gas Transmission Company the opportunity to receive its just and equitable share of the gas from this pool?

A Only if such a forced pooling order would provide that we could market the gas.

Q Would a forced pooling order afford Pan American the opportunity to receive its just and equitable share of the gas?

A Only with the same provision, because it would be possible that a forced pooling would not provide for the method, because there's no means, as I have just mentioned, of determining when Pan American's share only is left in the ground, and it will take care of this 1/8th plus their royalty and overriding royalty interest owners.

Q You have the same opinion with reference to other min-



eral interest owners?

- A Correct.
- Q In your opinion, would the forced pooling order in this case be in the interest of conservation?

I believe so, because my experience with conservation practices is that a reservoir or pool should be produced in such a manner so as not to provide waste and to provide for the most economical ultimate recovery of the product, whether it's gas or oil in place. It would seem to me that Section 65-3-14(c) of the New Mexico Oil Conservation Commission law, which provides: orders requiring such pooling shall be upon terms and conditions that are just and reasonable and will afford to the owner of each tract in the pool the opportunity to recover or receive his just and equitable share of the oil or gas or both in the pool as above provided so far as may be practicably recovered without waste." I believe that that sentence carries sufficient authority to allow the Commission to provide that a party who is forced pooled should be allowed to recover his just and equitable share, and that the Commission has the power to make the terms thereof which will so allow.

- Q Does Tennessee Gas have any objection to Pan American taking their gas in kind?
- A None whatsoever. As stated, we have submitted to them an agreement which will allow them to do just that.
 - Q The designation of operator would imply, would it not,



that they are in charge of the drilling?

- A That Tennessee is?
- Q Yes.
- A Yes.
- Q And the production and the sale --
- A Right.
- Q -- of the gas?
- A Yes.

MR. FEDERICI: That's all.

CROSS-EXAMINATION

BY MR. PAYNE:

- Mr. Sanders, inasmuch as your communitization was not successful with the working interest owners, did you contact the royalty owners on your communitization?
- A No, we always leave that until after the working interest owners have agreed. We had no time or eason to do that in this case.
- Q It goes without say that if the Commission forces pools, you would be entitled to market your gas insofar as the Commission in concerned?
 - A Yes.
- Q That doesn't alleviate your problem, you still have to get your permission from the Federal Power?
 - A I mentioned that we must get our certificate and have



our contract approved.

MR. UTZ: The hearing is adjourned until one-fifteen. (Recess)

AFTERNOON SESSION

MR. UTZ: The hearing will come to order.

MR. FEDERICI: I would like to ask the witness another question.

MR. UTZ: All right.

REDIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. FEDERICI:

Q Mr. Lacey had testified with respect to the mineral interest ownership, and it may have been incorrect. Would you state from the information that you have what the mineral interest ownership is in this area?

A It was only incorrect as far as the overriding royalty owners and the fee lease owners or lessors are concerned. The lessor under the 280-acre tract, in which Tennessee and Big Chief are the working interest owners, is: Glenn H. Callow is the lessor and the owner of 1/8th royalty. The overriding royalty interest owners are also Glenn H. Callow and Ruth E. Callow, Arnold E. Carle, C-a-r-l-e, H. K. Riddle. The 40-acre Pan American tract, the overriding royalty interest owners are: Hugh J. Mitchell and Raimonda, R-a-i-m-o-n-d-a Mitchell. The split mineral ownership in the fee tract there starts with Barbara Head Couturi, and as it



shows in our records, et al. Those are all the other parties set out in the application. I can read them off if you want me to.

MR. UTZ: They have been read into the record, I think

MR. FEDERICI: I believe that's all.

RECROSS-EXAMINATION

BY MR. PAYME:

- I understand your testimony correctly, you want it to provide that Tennessee is to get their proportionate share of the cost of the well from Pan American and other working interest owners in the event of production, plus a reasonable charge for operation and supervision?
 - A Correct.
- Q Now, do you propose to sell the gas that presumably would be owned by Pan American, or are you asking for some kind of stipulation in the forced pooling order covering this point?
 - A Yes.
 - Q What is that?
- Me believe that the order should be so phrased as to make it mandatory that we sell proportionately on an acreage basis every working interest owner's share under the best possible market we can obtain which, there only being one, being the hook-up with El Paso, there's only one way to get the gas to market.

 We believe the order should be so phrased as to permit us to market the gas without threat of a suit for conversion by Pan American



at some later date because of their refusal to sell, enter into a contract and sell the gas in Interstate Commerce at this time.

MR. PAYME: I see. Thank you.

QUESTIONS BY MR. UTZ:

Q Do' you know whether or not Pan American is in Interstate Commerce at the present time or not?

A Yes, they are. In other Dakota wells in the same general field.

Q Do you know of your own knowledge what the difference is between this and other tracts that they have in the immediate area?

A It's been our understanding, we have discussed this with them, not only from this well, but from other situations, that there have been certain obligatory wells that they have had to drill themselves to protect their leasehold interest from applied covenants in order to hold the lease. In this situation they do not have to hold the lease by production. Therefore, they want to keep the gas in the ground and attempt to sell it at a later date at a better price.

Q Then, they do object to your selling their gas?

A Yes, sir. They don't want to take it in kind because there's no place to store it. Therefore, it makes it, as I said, impossible for us to recover our just and equitable share of the reservoir without endangering ourselves with a prospective law suit.



MR. PAYME: Also makes it rather rough on the royalty owner under the 40-acre tract?

A That's correct. That royalty owner, if we did produce, would not receive any royalty because, theoretically, the amount of gas credited to that net acreage would receive no royalty.

Q (By Mr. Utz) Have you been in touch with the royalty owners under that 40-acre tract at all?

A No, sir, we haven't because they're Pan American's royalty owners and not ours.

Q Do you know whether or not Pan American would object to your producing and selling 7/8ths of an allowable from this tract? Well, in the event there is an allowable, there will be an allowable?

A Well, Pan American has informed us that they will hold us responsible, if we do produce the well, for conversion of this product. In essence, they are stating we can take our 7/8ths out, but we had better leave their 1/8th in.

Q In any event, if you take 7/3ths allowable for every ten-acre unit, isn't that what you would be doing, taking yours and leaving theirs in?

A It would if we can determine when theirs has been left and when ours has been taken out, plus the reservoir energy remaining in the ground to push the 1/8th out.

MR. UTZ: Are there other questions of the witness? If there are not, the witness may be excused. Do you have anything



more?

MR. FEDERICI: No, not from this witness.

MR. UTZ: You may be excused.

(Witness excused)

MR. SETH: I would like to call Mr. Lacey for a few questions.

MR. UTZ: All right.

JOHN J. LACEY.

recalled as a witness, having been previously sworn, testified as follows:

REDIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. SETH:

You have heard the testimony about this proposal or whatever term you want to call it about leaving 1/8th of the gas in the ground, which presumably would be Pan American's 1/8th, until the last, to take it out last. As an engineer, is that a feasible or practical solution to this problem?

A I would say no. You could never precisely determine what the total reserves are. You could make approximations on it, but the only thing, you could set an arbitrary figure that this well or this 320-acre tract has so many reserves and we could take, we could produce it until we had produced 7/8ths of those, and say the remaining eighth belonged to Pan American. However, it would be very conceivable that the well could have production beyond these arbitrary reserves that you might set. It's conceivable that



something could happen to the well, the productivity of the well would change or decrease, and you may not be able to do that.

Q If this determination, the burden of making this determination, were put on the operator, it could be quite severe and create quite a risk, too, could it not?

A Yes. The fact that the Dakota formation produces not only gas but condensate, and that gas, the condensate that you would recover is a continually changing figure. The gas condensate ratio will be low at the beginning, early life of the well, and become higher and higher, less condensate recovery toward the end of the life of the well. You would also have to determine when we had produced 7/8ths of the condensate and leave an eighth. You could never get the gas and condensate at one time to come out so that we had produced 7/8ths and left an eighth of each.

Q What is the practical solution?

A I would say the practical solution is Tennessee as an operator, the largest working interest, would be to drill and complete the well and produce it prudently and make the best arrangements it could to market the gas and make an accounting to the various interests and royalty interests, and pay them a proportionate share of what they received.

- Q This is the way it is customarily done?
- A This is the normal way it's done.

MR. SETH: That's all.

MR. PAYME: As a matter of fact, that's the purpose



of the forced pooling, is it not?

A Yes. I would say yes.

RECROSS-EXAMINATION

BY MR. UTZ:

- Even if you formed a non-standard unit here and produced only 7/8ths of the 320-acre unit, at some point during the completion period of the pool you or someone else in the pool would have produced that other 1/8th of gas, would they not?
 - A That's right.
- So, there's no practical solution to leaving 1/8th of that reserve in the ground?
- A There's no way of determining. Our share of the gas and their share of the gas is so intimately commingled or together that there is no way you can make a reasonable way of separating it and taking a portion out and leaving a portion in the ground.
- Not unless they want to build them an impermeable fence?

A Right.

MR. UTZ: That's all I have.

MR. SETH: That's all the testimony we have. We would like to offer our Exhibits if we haven't already. I think we just had the one, the plat.

MR. UTZ: Exhibit No. 1 will be entered into the record.

(Whereupon, Applicant's Exhibit 1 received in evidence.)



MR. UTZ: Any other statements in this case?

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Examiner, we have received communications from Pan American Petroleum Corporation and Big Chief. Big Chief does not object to being forced pooled in this unit. Pan American states that they have no objection to being forced pooled but they put certain limitations on it, and we'll place their entire communication into the record.

MR. UTZ: Does that letter state their objection to a normal communitization?

MR. PAYNE: More or less.

MR. UTZ: Any other statements? The case will be taken under advisement.



STATE OF NEW MEXICO)

ss
county of Bernalillo)

I, ADA DEARNLEY, Court Reporter, in and for the County of Bernalillo, State of New Mexico, do hereby certify that the foregoing and attached Transcript of Proceedings before the New Mexico Oil Conservation Commission was reported by me in machine shorthand and reduced to typewritten transcript under my personal supervision, and that the same is a true and correct record to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.

WITNESS my Hand and Seal this, the May of Luguer 1960, in the City of Albuquerque, County of Bernalillo, State of New Mexico.

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission expires:

June 19, 1963

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a complete record of the proceedings in the Examiner hearing of the Ec. 2042

New Mexico Oll Conservation Commission

