

# Pupil Transportation In North Carolina One Of Best In Country

## School Buses Transport Approximately 347,000 Children Daily

North Carolina has one of the best public school pupil transportation programs in the country, the State Education Commission has found.

The percentage of enrolled pupils transported is the highest and the per pupil cost is the lowest in the nation.

The State daily transports to and from school approximately 347,000 pupils, or about 42 per cent of the total enrolled in the public elementary and secondary schools of the State, in more than 5,500 vehicles at a total annual cost of approximately \$5,000,000 or a per pupil cost of approximately \$14.

The State has assumed almost all of the responsibility of transportation costs. The State first permitted use of public funds for this purpose in 1911. Because of poor roads in many areas and poor equipment, there was no immediate rush to take advantage of this legislation. By 1919 only 7,900 pupils were being transported in North Carolina in 150 vehicles. Most of the growth in pupil transportation has taken place in the last 25 years. In 1946-1947, nine per cent of the funds for current expense of the public elementary and secondary schools of North Carolina went into pupil transportation as compared with approximately 5 per cent for the nation as a whole.

At present, almost all of the cost of operating the school buses and all of the cost of replacing them is borne by the State. All of the cost of additional new buses, school bus garages and garage equipment is borne by the counties. In its study, the Commission found that many counties have been unable to obtain money for additional buses or equipment for school garages.

For this reason, the Commission has recommended that the State share with the counties the costs for all new buses, garages and equipment for garages. The State Board of Education would handle the funds, and a "more objective formula" would be worked out for allotting buses to counties.

The present system of making counties responsible for capital outlay is undesirable for a number of reasons, the Commission said. In the first place, it was said, it may cause a waste of State funds in the continuation of small and inefficient schools. One situation was found where three small schools could have been closed and with the addition of one teacher at a larger school and two buses, the pupils could have been transported to the larger school. The difference between the cost of operating two buses and the salary for two teachers would have almost paid for the buses in two years and would have represented a net saving and provided better educational opportunities to the children. The waste continued because the county could not afford to purchase two new buses. The situation is especially striking in the case of many

small high schools.

The use of local funds for initial capital outlay also has an undesirable effect on the quality of transportation service, the Commission said.

"There seems to be little chance for relieving some of the overcrowded conditions on buses and of making the first pick-up of children approximately one hour before school until a change is made in the method of providing funds for the purchase of buses," it said.

It is estimated that 3 per cent of the transported pupils must leave home more than two hours before school begins, seven per cent more than one and a half hours, and 20 per cent more than one hour.

This is the result of using more than one-half the buses for two or more trips.

Standards for school buses in North Carolina are adequate, the Commission said. The present fleet is in excellent condition despite the fact that more than 1,500 of the buses are more than eight years old.

The program in school bus maintenance is, in general, excellent, the Commission said, but many counties need more adequate buildings and maintenance equipment, and there is a need for a few area garages where the more difficult maintenance work can be done.

The use of students, who have an excellent record, as school bus drivers should be continued, the Commission said. Over the last five years 83 per cent of the school bus drivers in North Carolina have been high school boys and girls. This has been a very great factor in achieving the State's record for economy in pupil transportation. The standards these student drivers must meet seem to be adequate, the Commission says, except for the lack of the requirement that they pass a physical examination.

The Commission said that during the last five years only about 25 per cent of the premiums paid out for fire insurance on buses have been collected and that it would be good business for the State Board of Education to act as self insurer for the buses.

The Board may now pay up to \$600 on expenses of pupils who are injured on or by school buses. That this figure should be increased is indicated by the fact that at least 20 counties are now carrying accident insurance on transported pupils and that every session of the Legislature has before it special bills providing for the cost of medical or funeral expenses above the \$600 limit.

## Veterans Urged To Exchange Certificates

World War II veterans holding unused certificates of eligibility for G.I. Bill education or training issued before September 1 should exchange them immediately for a new type certificate if they plan to enter training for the first time after January 1, the Veterans Administration announces.

The certificates may be exchanged in person or by mail at any Veterans Administration office, VA pointed out.

The exchange is being urged, VA said, because of new registration techniques that will be used after January 1, to safeguard the interests of veterans and the government. One advantage of the new certificates is that they will be accepted by schools and the VA without question. Old certificates are not acceptable until verified, it was pointed out.

## Tree Planting Film Available For Clubs

An informational film on the subject of tree planting in the South has been completed under the sponsorship of the Southern Pulpwood Conservation Association and the Georgia Forestry Department, according to an announcement by H. J. Malsberger, Forester of the Association.

"Lonnie's New Crop" describes how a young farmer makes unpro-

ductive land work at a profit growing trees. It shows where to get the information on tree planting, how to buy trees, and all the steps required in planting and caring for them.

The film is adapted for use at meetings of landowners, in schools, civic groups, and similar meetings where forestry is being considered. It allows ample time for discussion of the subject as it applies to the local community.

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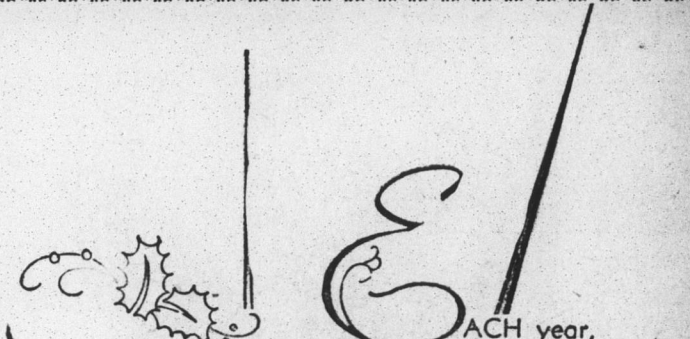
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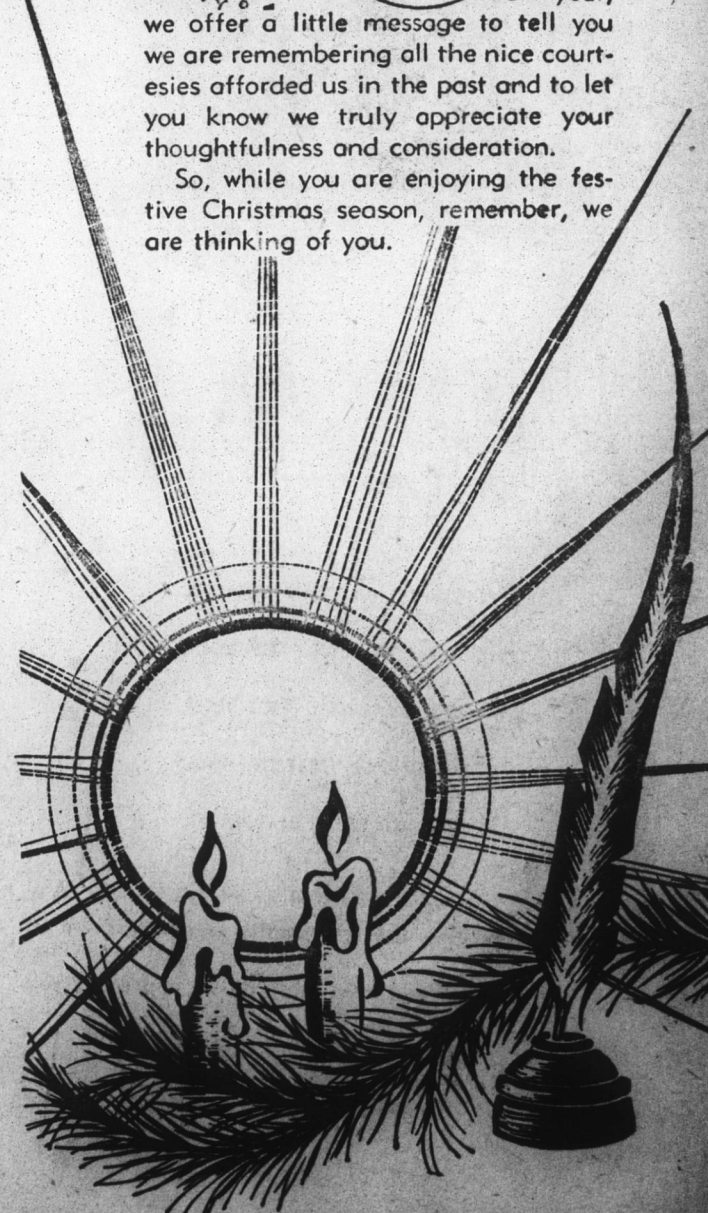


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