

Traffic Fatalities For The Month Of February Total 67

Raleigh. — During February, 67 persons lost their lives in 62 fatal traffic accidents on North Carolina streets and highways, a 45 per cent increase in deaths over the same month last year when 37 persons were killed in 32 fatal accidents, the Motor Vehicle Department announced today.

The February figures brought traffic deaths for 1949 to 122, an increase of 23 per cent over the 99 persons killed in the same two-months' period last year. The Department expressed grave concern over the tremendous rise in traffic deaths and called on the State's motorists to exercise more caution in their driving to the end that accidents may be prevented.

Total accidents for the State during February numbered 1,287, an increase of 17 per cent over the 1,069 accidents reported during February of 1948. Injuries for the month showed a 20 per cent increase—588 persons injured in February, as compared with 472 for the same month last year. Of the injured, 187 were severely hurt, and 401 only slightly.

The report showed that 24 of the fatalities were pedestrians, who literally "walked themselves to death," (an increase of 63 per cent over pedestrian deaths for February of last year); 20 persons died in motor vehicle collision accidents, (an increase of 20 per cent); 12 were killed when the vehicles in which they were riding ran off roadways, (increase of 42-per cent); three persons were killed when their vehicles overturned on roadways,

(increase of 300 per cent); three lost their lives when their vehicles struck fixed objects; two persons were fatally hit while riding their bicycles; one died when his vehicle was struck by a train, and two others died in non-collision accidents.

The Department expressed concern over the rise in pedestrian fatalities. During the month, there were 71 accidents involving pedestrians, with 24 of the walkers being killed and 57 others injured, 13 severely and 44 slightly. More pedestrians under 14 years of age were killed and injured than any other age group.

The Department pointed out that the pedestrian must learn to obey traffic rules and cooperate with motorists in preventing accidents. The education of the pedestrian in safe walking habits, however, should in no way detract from the responsibility and necessary alertness of the motor vehicle operator.

A total of 496 accidents, with 10 persons killed and 131 injured, occurred in cities and towns. Durham, Gastonia, Halifax, Wilmington, Madison, Salisbury, Clinton, Pinnacle, Warrenton, and Wilson reported one fatality each.

In rural areas, a total of 791 accidents were reported, claiming 57 lives and injuring 457 others. Of the rural accidents, 432 occurred on U. S. highways, 181 on state highways, and 178 on county or local roads.

Accidents don't just happen, the report stated; they are caused—not one cause, but many. Here are some of the violations causing accidents during February: Driving on wrong side of road, not in passing, caused 247 accidents, 20 of them fatal. Exceeded stated speed limit caused 214 accidents, 12 of them fatal. Did not have right of way was the cause for 261 mishaps, 5 of them fatal. Failure to use bright headlights caused 93 accidents, three of them fatal. A total of 111 drivers were operating their cars while under the influence of alcohol, with two of them being involved in fatal accidents.

Caldwell, Cleveland, Robeson, Rowan, Sampson, and Wake counties led in fatalities for the month, with three persons killed in each county. Burke, Chero-

Norfolk Policemen Named In Number Racket Indictment

Norfolk, Va.—A Corporation Court grand jury yesterday indicted 24 Norfolk policemen on charges of accepting bribes as part of a payoff system to cover for the numbers racket.

Shortly after the indictments were returned, suspension of the 24 and six other policemen was announced by acting police chief C. H. Dalby.

Dalby said the suspensions resulted from an investigation of the Police Department by himself and Special Counsel E. Pryor Worthington.

The indictments returned yesterday charged that each of the 24 patrolmen accepted \$10 from Patrolman C. A. Withrow between Nov. 1 and Dec. 10, 1948.

Withrow testified last month before a special grand jury that he had accepted and distributed bribes for W. Carvel Benson, who has often been arrested here on numbers lottery charges. The special grand jury, named to investigate possible corruption in the Police Department and vice conditions in the city, returned an indictment for bribery against Benson but took no other direct action.

Benson's trial ended in a hung jury. He will be tried again April 27.

Withrow was one of the six policemen suspended yesterday along with those indicted in Corporation Court. Patrolman W. E. Falles, Withrow, and Dalby all presented testimony to the jury before the indictments were returned.

Bond for the indicted patrolmen was set at \$1,000 each.

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