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A SURVEY OF HILL COUNTY SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION COSTS, 1949-50

A Professional Paper

by

Wilbur Swenson
B.A., Montana State University, 1946

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Montana State University
1951

Approved:

Chairman of Board
of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Equalizing educational opportunities is a goal of most administrators. Harold Spears stated, "America's guiding star, in her progress as a nation and in the advancement of her people as individuals has been - and still is - equality of opportunity."[1] One of the means of equalizing educational opportunities is the school transportation system.

Constant attention and planning by school authorities are necessary in order to derive the greatest benefit from school transportation service. Paul B. Norris wrote, "Too many administrators are determined to avoid any responsibility for transportation; some state that they want no responsibility for the child until he is delivered to the school."[2] Administrators must accept pupil transportation as an integral part of the school program as it is an important service essential to the equalizing of educational opportunities.

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1 Harold Spears, The High School For Today, American Book Company, 1950, p.3.

2 Paul B. Norris, "Problems in School Transportation", School Management, April, 1949, pp. 13-14.

One of the many problems involved in school transportation is the financing of the program. Many educators favor transportation schedules in which the states assume the major portion of the cost. When the states take over the support of transportation, regulation and uniformity become imperative and there tends to develop centralized systems of records, better bus inspection, and more economical operation.

The purpose of this survey is (1) to review some of the history of pupil transportation, (2) to see how the school transportation costs of Hill County, Montana compare with national costs and with Montana costs, and (3) to determine what changes may be made to improve the present school transportation program in Hill County.

Hill County has followed the general pattern in Montana as the growing sparsity of the rural population has brought about serious educational problems. During the 1949-50 school term 136 children attended rural schools in Hill County and 1996 children attended town schools. Sixty-eight per cent of the total children enrolled in school attended Havre schools. In this same period, seven town schools and twenty-three rural schools were in operation.

With a population of 14,281 persons concentrated

mainly in the east central portion of the county and an area of 2,907 square miles, Hill County, which is shown on MAP I, page 5, has played an important part in Montana's history. Havre is a division point for the Great Northern Railroad and Hill County's large productive farms and ranches are helping Montana maintain its position as a wheat and cattle producing state. As the county has progressed, the problem of educating the children in the rural areas has become a challenge to educators. To the parents, who struggle to give their children an education, such conditions as poor roads, long distances to school, and bad weather are often all but insurmountable obstacles.

Parents living in sparsely settled areas want educational opportunities for their children which are not provided by schools within walking distances. With an interest in the child's educational growth and development, parents are requesting school district trustees to provide transportation so that their children may take advantage of educational facilities available in the larger school systems.

Over four hundred children in Hill County received transportation during the 1949-50 school term. Ninety-eight children rode district-owned school busses, 81 children were considered isolated and received payments

on that basis, and 258 children were listed under the regular transportation schedule. School administrators are receiving requests from parents living in rural areas to expand the school bus facilities.

A review of the history of pupil transportation, a comparison of Hill County transportation costs with the national costs and with Montana costs, and an analysis of Hill County's transportation program may reveal possible solutions to some of the numerous school transportation problems. A study of the problem may help in devising an efficient program of school transportation which will result in equalizing educational opportunities for children living in rural areas.

MAP I

MONTANA

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION: NATIONAL, STATE, AND HILL COUNTY

Pupil transportation is a modern educational development. Only, a little more than a generation ago, very few pupils were transported at public expense and only an insignificant portion of the school budget was used for transportation. The extension of the scope of school transportation has resulted in problems such as financing, types of busses, routes, and a more uniform system of standards.

A - HISTORY OF THE NATION'S SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

"Bugs Bunny -- leaving from the main driveway immediately." The youngsters of Brighton School District #1 make a dash for their favorite school bus as the announcer makes this call. Other youngsters anxiously stand in line waiting for the announcer to state when they may board their favorite bus -- Mighty Mouse, Eddie the Elephant, Porky Pig, or Donald Duck.[1]

This idea has relieved a great deal of the congestion as the youngsters know the mascot painted on

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1 "New Cartoons Identify Town School Busses", School Management, May, 1950, p.5.

the side of each bus where before they often forgot the number of their bus. School authorities liked the idea and parents dropped by the school and asked about school busses by the name of the cartoon painted on the side.[2]

This modern idea in school bus transportation represents a radical change from the early beginnings in Quincy, Massachusetts.

> The children, some round-eyed and solemn, some giggling stared at the crude plank seats of the box wagon as it bumped along the cobbled streets.[3]

Present day reactions to school bus transportation are considerably different from the comment of one bewhiskered Civil War veteran, who viewed the strange new vehicle as, "The dumdest thing, ridin' kids to school. Whatever's the world coming to?"[4]

> This episode took place in September, 1869, and John Quincy Adams II, chairman of the Quincy school board complained, "There has been no improvement and little change in our schools for a century." In April, 1869, the Massachusetts Legislature passed a transportation law which legalized pupil transportation at public expense and its influence was soon felt in other states, especially the New England states.[5]

Prior to 1900, pupil transportation was in an experimental stage. Only a few states, chiefly eastern,

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2 Ibid., p.5.

3 Robert W. Howard, "Acorns of Industry - The School Bus System", Nation's Business, May, 1949, pp. 52-81.

4 Ibid., pp.52-81.

5 Ibid., pp.52-81.

took steps toward permitting the transportation of pupils. As these programs took place before the invention of the automobile and the building of good roads, horse drawn carriages and wagons were the vehicles of transportation, and when we picture these slow moving vehicles, commonly known as "kid hacks", parents were justified in their strong objections to the program.[6]

This method of using rebuilt box wagons, surreys, and buggies to transport pupils at public expense spread slowly across the country during the last half of the nineteenth century. Problems faced school administrators as there were no standards of size or color for school busses, no warning signs, and little attention was paid to the 35 or 40 children as they tumbled out of the make-shift conveyances.[7]

Since 1900, the growth of transportation has been phenomenal. The numerous state transportation laws have greatly changed our educational program and the transporting of millions of pupils has intensified the problem of proper, safe, comfortable, expeditious, and economical operation of school busses.

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6 Ward G. Reeder, The Administration of Pupil Transportation, The Educator's Press, Columbus, Ohio, 1939, pp.1-13.

7 Ibid., pp.1-13.

State legislatures have often been reluctant to pass needed legislation even though they have been advised by school authorities and auto manufacturers of the need for conformity.

> Dr. Frank Cyr of Teachers College, Columbia University, was named by the General Education Board, in 1937, to conduct a nation-wide survey of school busses. In the spring of 1939, after extensive research, Cyr called a conference of delegates of manufacturers, state departments of education, the American Automobile Association, and the United States Office of Education. This group set up minimum standards of safety and efficiency of school busses. They selected chrome-yellow as the best identifying color and a thorough investigation was made of body designs, brakes, warning signs, and signal lights.[8]

Some states still do not make any provision for state financial assistance for transportation. The policies relating to transportation are not uniform. For example, some states provide that pupils living more than a certain distance (usually 2 or 3 miles) must be transported at public expense while other states leave the matter to the local districts.

> Eighteen states provide aid through special-purpose flat grants, sixteen as parts of their foundation programs, two through special-purpose equalization funds, and four through some combination of the above.
>
> Eighty years after the first school bus trip in Quincy, Massachusetts, the school bus has developed into the largest passenger carrier in the world, Each school day, 93,000 busses carry 4,600,000 pupils over routes 1,516,000 miles long or a total trip of 15,000,000 miles a week on 127,000 highways. This program has grown into an average annual

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8 Ibid., pp.52-81.

> expenditure of $107,700,000 and employs some 100,000 drivers and mechanics.[9]

B - HISTORY OF MONTANA'S SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

1 - Early Development in Montana

Thirty-four years after the Massachusetts State Legislature passed a transportation bill, the first law, providing for the transportation of school children was passed by the Montana State Legislature.

> The first law passed in 1903, by the Montana State Legislature, permitted the transportation of children to school when it was deemed best to close a school. The state legislature realized the growing importance of transportation as a means of providing equal educational opportunities and passed laws in 1911, 1925, 1941, and 1949, which helped the transportation problems. The 1911 legislation referred to transportation within the school district between the school and the home. In 1925, the legislature passed an act which compelled school districts to advertise for bids when transporting more than five pupils in a single route. The 1941 act set up a schedule for state and county transportation payments. Procedure in reimbursing on school busses was the change made by the 1949 legislature.
>
> For many years school transportation was considered an insignificant part of the overall school program. The Biennal Reports from the State Department of Public Instruction did not list transportation as a separate activity until 1912. Mr. Harmon, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in 1921, listed a form used in the Victor schools as a method of calling for bids on transportation -- "The bidder was called upon to provide a gentle

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9 The Forty-Eight State School Systems, The Council of State Governments, Chicago, Illinois, 1949, pp. 101-106.

> team of horses, not afraid of cars or autos. The bidder was required to equip the vehicles with laprobes during cold weather and provide a bond of $100.00. All contracts were first approved by the transportation committee before they were accepted by the Board of Trustees. The transportation committee consisted of the Superintendent of Schools, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and the School District Clerk."
>
> In 1914, the transportation expense was listed as $26,636.18 with 28 counties reporting some expense while 11 did not have any expenditures for transportation. The top four counties in amount of transportation expenditures were Missoula -- $3,563.80, Ravalli -- $2,815.50, Lincoln -- $2,105, and Teton -- $2,096.72.[10]

There has been a rapid growth in school transportation in Montana as is shown by FIGURE 1 on page 12. In compiling this figure, the author used material given in Knute W. Bergan's unpublished history of school transportation in Montana.

So large has school transportation become that the Montana State Legislature in 1949 set up the office of supervisor of transportation under the Department of Public Instruction. As supervisor of transportation on a part-time basis is provided in paragraph (1) of Section 7, Chapter 152, School Laws of Montana:

> For the purpose of developing economy and efficiency in the transportation of school children, the state superintendent of public instruction shall be authorized to employ a competent person as supervisor of transportation.

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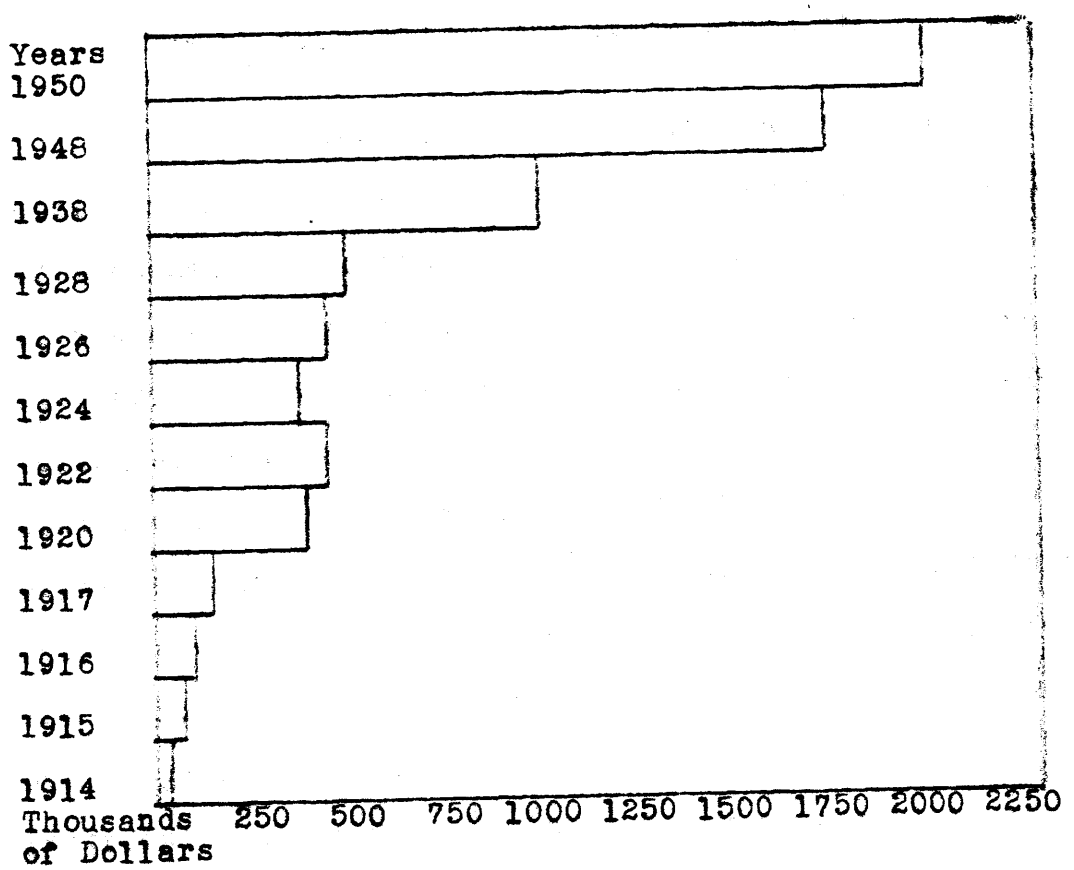
10 Knute W. Bergan, An unpublished history of school transportation in Montana, 1950.

FIGURE I

GROWTH IN MONTANA SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION COSTS [11]



11 Ibid. p.1.

> Not less than one-half of his time shall be devoted to this service. The other time may be spent as provided by law or as otherwise provided. His salary and expenses shall be paid in proportion to the time spent as transportation supervisor, from the transportation funds as approved by the state board of education.[12]

Knute Bergan was appointed in 1949 to the position of supervisor of transportation for the state of Montana. His office has directed the publication of manuals for administrators and school bus drivers. The office also audits transportation claims for state reimbursements and acts as advisor on transportation controversies. Mr. Bergan has helped conduct bus driver training schools so as to promote safety, develop better procedures in handling groups of school children, and methods for better care of school busses. The two main objectives of the state department of public instruction are safety and efficiency in school transportation.

The Annual Report for 1949-50, Division of School Transportation, Department of Public Instruction, by K. W. Bergan states,

> The school transportation system is the largest transportation system in the State of Montana. Last year 653 busses carried over 19,000 pupils for a distance of 5,399,068 bus miles and a total of over 59 million pupil miles. Because of this

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12 School Laws of the State Of Montana, 1949, p. 50.

tremendous size the school transportation program requires constant study and refinement.[13]

2 - Recent Development in Montana, Present State Laws on School Transportation

The need for transportation has little relation to the wealth of the school unit as often the units with large programs of transportation are not as wealthy as some of those with smaller programs. The educational program is severely handicapped when a local unit has to use a large per cent of its income for transportation. In considering this factor, transportation needs should be considered in any state plan for financing the educational program. Many states use the procedure of making the transportation service a part of the minimum program which is guaranteed to the local unit in determining state aid.

Under Chapters 117 -- High School Code - County High School - Junior High Schools, 110 -- Vehicles Used In Transportation of Pupils - Busses, 152 -- Transportation, and 183 -- School Bus Safety Regulations of the School Laws of the State Of Montana, 1949, the state legislature has set up a program of school transportation. Chapter 152, Section 13 of the School Laws of the State Of Montana, 1949, states:

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13 "Annual Report for 1949-50, Division of School Transportation, Department of Public Instruction", K. W. Bergan, pp. 1-12.

> (a) Each school district and each county high school meeting the requirements of this Act shall be entitled to reimbursements from the state public school general fund in an amount of one-third (1/3) of the schedule provided for transportation ... (b) Each school district maintaining one or more elementary schools, or providing for the transportation of its elementary pupils to attend school in another district, meeting the requirements of this Act, shall be entitled to reimbursements from the county school fund provided by the tax levy authorized and made in accordance with the provisions of section 1202, of one-third (1/3) of the schedule provided for transportation ....[14]

and Chapter 183 - School Bus Safety Regulations, Section 1 states:

> That the State Board of Education, by and with the advice of the Supervisor of the Montana Highway Patrol and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall adopt and enforce regulations not inconsistent with the Motor Vehicle Code and the Minimum Standards for School Busses, adopted by the National Commission on Safety Education to govern the design, construction, and operation of all school busses used for the transportation of school children ....[15]

The 1949 session of the state legislature made a change in the school transportation schedule which has increased the amount reimbursed by the state. The state legislature has set up three transportation schedules -- bus, individual, and isolated.

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14 School Laws of the State Of Montana, 1949, pp. 51-54.

15 Ibid., pp. 51-54.

In 1949, the reimbursement rate for busses was changed from a pupil-mile basis. The law provides that the rate for school busses be twenty cents ($.20) for all busses up to thirty-pupil capacity. The rate is increased 1/2¢ per pupil per mile above thirty passengers.

The individual transportation program provides for payments to individual families when the family furnishes its own transportation or services in lieu of transportation such as board and room or correspondence study. This program is administered according to a schedule set up in Chapter 152, School Laws of 1949, as follows:

Individual Transportation Schedule

Children	3 & 4 Miles	5 & 6 Miles	7 & 12 Miles	Over 12 Miles
1	$ .30	$ .36	$ .48	$ .60
2	.42	.48	.60	.72
3	.54	.60	.72	.84
4	.66	.72	.84	.96
5		.84	.96	1.08
6			1.08	1.20

The third program for state reimbursement of school transportation comes under the Isolated Transportation Law. This program provides for reimbursement up to $30.00 per month for the first child, $12.00 per month for the second child, and $6.00 per month for the third and additional children.[16]

The Montana State Legislature saw the importance of the isolated program so included:

> In isolated cases where facts and circumstances render payments with the above schedule inadequate and adherence to such schedule would subject the parents or guardian of a school child or the child himself to financial or physical hardship, the schedule may be altered ....[17]

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16 Your Schools Today, Montana, 1948-50, Biennal Report of the Department of Public Instruction, p. 71.

17 School Laws of the State Of Montana, 1949, p.49.

Another of the problems in school transportation is the determination of the degree of isolation for those who have requested transportation payments on the basis of isolation. Mr. Bergan, Supervisor of Transportation, has set up a suggested schedule to determine the degree of isolation as the law does not define isolation nor the factors involved:

Individual Transportation
Degree of Isolation

Group 1 Individual Transportation Regular Schedule
- (a) Pupils drive their own car, vehicle or horseback.
- (b) Roads are passable except in extreme weather. Graded 90% of way.
- (c) Recommendation of County Transportation Committee and School District Trustees.

Group 2 Increase Individual Transportation (25%)
- (a) Children transport themselves two-thirds of the time.
- (b) Roads and weather become so hazardous that an adult must accompany them one-third of the time. Graded 75% of the way.
- (c) As in c in #1.

Group 3 Increase Individual Transportation (50%)
- (a) Children are so young that an adult person must drive them to school each day.
- (b) Roads are passable except during extreme weather. Graded 50% of the way.
- (c) As in c in #1.
- (d) Distance above five miles.

Group 4 Increase Individual Transportation (75%)
- (a) Children are too young to transport themselves.
- (b) Roads very difficult, graded only 25% of the way. Distances 7 to 12 miles.
- (c) As in c in #1.
- (d) Distance above seven miles.

Group 5 Increase Individual Transportation (100%)
- (a) Children are too young to transport

themselves and must have an adult driver.
(b) Roads require extra equipment as a jeep, for mountain roads, not a graded road.
(c) Distance over 12 miles.
(d) As c in #1.

Group 6 Maximum Isolated Transportation (Payment of $1.50 per day for first child, sixty cents per day for second child, thirty cents per day for third child, etc.)
(a) The pupil is boarded near the school or the family must leave home and rent a house near the school and maintain two house-holds.
(b) The distance is so great that the pupil cannot be transported or the roads are so impassable for such a long period of time that transportation is impractical.
(c) As in c in #1.[18]

As the farm units have increased in size, the rural population has decreased. Parents are demanding a better education for their children. These changes in educational viewpoint and population have placed a definite demand upon school transportation because the school population has become more sparse and facilities have become more centralized.

C - HISTORY OF HILL COUNTY'S SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Hill County's sparse rural population has placed a heavy demand on school transportation and the county's expenditures for this vital factor in education has

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18 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

increased as it has throughout the nation.

Four school districts in Hill County -- Havre, Hingham, Inverness, and Rudyard now provide bus transportation, and its growing importance is reflected by the recent periods in which Hingham and Rudyard began bus service. School administrators and school trustees are contemplating an expansion of the present programs or the beginning of the service in their school district.

Inverness, School District #28, set up a program of school bus transportation in 1935. On August 28, 1940, sixteen signers from Fort Assinniboine sent a petition to the Havre school district trustees requesting that their children be transported to Havre schools as the elementary school at Fort Assinniboine had been closed. In 1946, Hingham, School District #24, started its bus program and in 1949 Rudyard, School District #26, purchased a bus to provide transportation for some of the district's rural area.

Each year more of the rural families inquire about the possibility of changing or extending the bus routes so as to include their homes. For example, Rathbun, School District #63, which is located about fifteen miles south of Rudyard is purchasing a school bus and will establish a route to provide transportation for the boys and girls in the district. The proposed route from the

Rathbun School District would be about twenty-eight miles in length, most of which is elevated grade. The school trustees favor such a plan as they see the advantages of a larger school system. They are aware, too, of the fact that several of their families have been maintaining homes in Rudyard besides the home on the farm. This new school bus route would provide transportation for sixteen elementary and high school youngsters in its first year of operation.

Rudyard, School District #26, is purchasing a larger school bus as the north route will be extended about five miles. Plans are also being made to establish a route south of Rudyard so as to utilize the bus now in operation and also to meet the demands of school patrons in that area. This proposed route will be within District #26 and will not cover the same territory as the Rathbun route.

Box Elder, School District #13, is making plans for a bus route to include the area fifteen miles west of Box Elder. The route will provide transportation for about ten children. This bus will be on a contract basis and the notice of call for bids stated that the bus must be constructed for rough winter weather conditions.

School transportation programs have developed rapidly in recent years on the national, state, and local levels. From the early beginning at Quincy, Massachusetts, to the present time, school transportation has made strides as a method of equalizing educational opportunities.

State legislatures have realized the importance of school transportation and have passed laws to provide the basis for such programs. The United States Office of Education and the State Department of Public Instruction have stressed the importance of school transportation as a means of providing better educational facilities. They have encouraged programs of school transportation based on efficiency, safety, and the best interest of the children.

CHAPTER III

TRANSPORTATION COSTS: NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL

E. Glenn Featherston, supervisor of transportation in the United States Office of Education, stated, "On the average according to the best data available, almost five per cent of all funds for current expenses now go for pupil transportation, and in a few states 15 per cent or more of the current expense budget is for transportation."[1]

A - NATIONAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION COSTS

Featherston also wrote, "The number of pupils transported at public expense has increased from 1,100,000 in 1925-26 to an estimated 6,000,000 in 1949-50. It is estimated that the cost of this service, which was about $35,500,000 in 1925-26, will be approximately $200,000,000 in 1949-50."[2]

There were fewer than 75,000 one-room schools in the United States in 1949-50 compared with 107,000 in 1941. This decrease in the number of one-room schools

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1 E. Glenn Featherston, "Uniform Accounting Is The Crying Need in Pupil Transportation", The Nation's Schools, April, 1950, pp. 71-73.

2 Ibid., pp. 71-73.

has been due in part, to the tremendous expansion of school transportation facilities.[3]

> The growth of school bus transportation is further indicated by the fact that the number of children using school busses daily has increased from 5,416,000 in 1948-49 to 5,720,000 in 1949-50, a gain of nearly six per cent. The number of busses in school operation increased from 90,400 to 97,583, a gain of 7.96 per cent. These busses will travel 2,079,384 miles to 45,256 schools during the current school year.
>
> Another significant change is the increase of $32,322,000 in the cost of pupil transportation. This represents an increase of 22.27 per cent for 1949-50, from $145,200,000 to $177,532,000. The estimated cost per bus mile has risen from 20.32 cents to 24.12 cents, an increase of 18.72 per cent.[4]

In the pamphlet, "Statistics On Pupil Transportation, 1947-48", by David T. Blose and E. Glenn Featherston and published by the Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, the statistics shown on TABLE I, page 24, were given (the nine states listed were selected to show the state with the lowest average cost per pupil transported - Alabama, the state with the highest average cost per pupil transported - Kansas, and the state with the largest number of pupils enrolled transported at public expense - California, and five states often used by organizations within Montana when comparisons are made - North Dakota, Idaho, Washington, Wyoming, and Minnesota).

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3 "School Transportation Figures Are Up Again", School Management, April, 1950, p. 10.

4 Ibid., p. 10.

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS [5]

State	N.P.T.P.T.	% E.T.	E.P.F.T.	A.C.P.P.	% T.C.
Alabama	253,786	39.2	$4,517,280	$17.80	7.7
California	290,000 (Estimated)	26	8,055,977	27.78	2.6
Idaho	36,108	31.3	1,346,040	37.28	8.1
Kansas	39,756	11.9	2,990,356	75.22	5.7
Minnesota	134,550	28	7,230,537	53.74	8.2
MONTANA	23,451	24.1	1,711,635	72.99	8.0
North Dakota	17,317	15.4	992,909	57.34	5.4
Washington	129,000	32.6	3,587,607	27.81	4.7
Wyoming	13,449	24.6	861,366	64.05	9.2
Total (48 states)	5,854,041	24.4	$176,265,156	$30.11	4.7

N.P.T.P.T. -- Number of Pupils Transported At Public Expense
% E.T. -- Per Cent Enrolled Transported
E.P.F.T. -- Expenditure of Public Funds For Transportation (Exclude Capital Outlay)
A.C.P.P. -- Average Cost Per Pupil Transported
% T.C. -- Per Cent Transportation Cost Is of Current Expense

5 David T. Blose and E. Glenn Featherston, "Statistics On Pupil Transportation, 1947-48", Federal Security Council, Office of Education.

TABLE I, page 24, gives a comparison of the Montana figures with eight other states and also a comparison with national figures. Montana's per cent enrolled transported of 24.1 is close to the national average of 24.4. In the average cost per pupil transported and the per cent transportation cost is of current expense, Montana ranks high because of the state's sparse population and great distances to school.

Another analysis of national school transportation costs is shown on TABLE II, page 26. This table shows a comparison of states with small districts and states with large districts. Illinois has the most school districts and ranks highest in annual cost per pupil transported while its pupils transported percentage is the lowest.

School transportation needs must be considered in any state plan for financing the educational program. The overall problem of providing an efficient system of school transportation is the responsibility of the local school districts. With the rapidly increasing costs of school transportation efficient operation of this service is an important responsibility of the school administrators.

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF TRANSPORTATION COSTS IN STATES WITH SMALL AND LARGE DISTRICTS (1948-49) [6]

States	No. of Districts	Teachers In One Room Schools	Pupils Transported	Annual Cost Per Pupil Transported
(Small Districts)				
Illinois	11,998	38%	8.6%	$56.28
Iowa	4,856	46	18.5	31.61
Minnesota	7,680	44	22	46.31
Wisconsin	5,055	43	11.1	47.12
(Large Districts)				
Indiana	979	5.4%	60.1%	$30.34
Ohio	1,605	3.4	50.4	25.45
North Carolina	170	4.4	38.9	8.66
Washington	838	4.1	58.2	22.90
United States	108,880	20.5%	29.3%	$24.42

6 Julian E. Butterworth, "What Effect Has The Size Of The District On Pupil Transportation", The Nation's Schools, August, 1949.

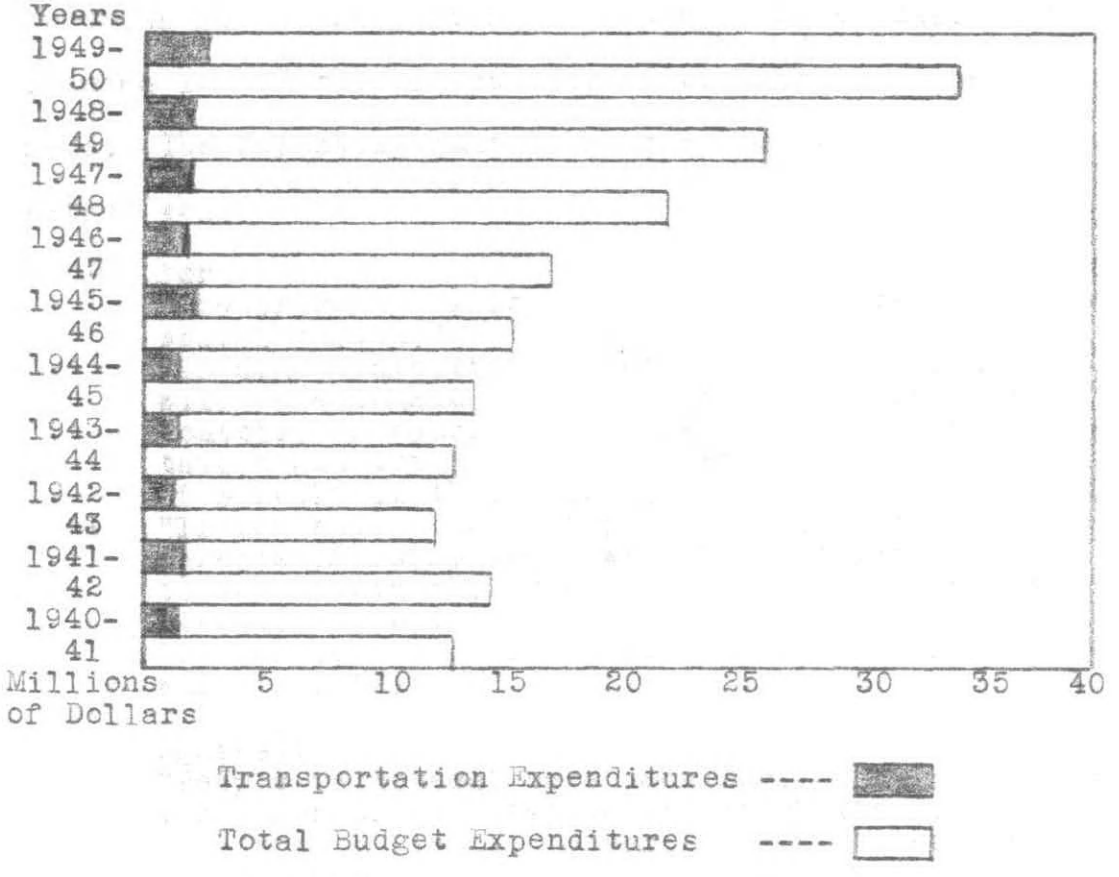
B - MONTANA SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION COSTS

School transportation has developed rapidly in Montana and with this program many problems have arisen because of the sparsely populated areas and unimproved roads. These problems have caused a great deal of anxiety to the State Department of Public Instruction, the state legislature, and school administrators.

The Montana Taxpayers Association in the December, 1950, issue of the Montana Taxpayer printed a chart entitled Comparison of School Expenditures, 1940-50. The chart included all the items in the budget, but as this survey is dealing with transportation costs only that section of the budget as listed in the chart is shown on FIGURE II, page 28. FIGURE II shows an increase in transportation costs from $1,155,902 in 1940-41 to $2,093,397 in 1949-50. The total budget expenditures in 1940-41 were $12,824,108 and the expenditures increased to $33,499,086 in 1949-50. These figures show an increase of 81 per cent in the transportation costs and an increase of 161 per cent in the total budget expenditures. FIGURE II shows a comparison of the transportation costs with the total budget expenditures for the period of 1940-41 to 1949-50.

FIGURE II

COMPARISON OF TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES WITH TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURES[7]



7 Montana Taxpayer, December, 1950.

In considering the rising costs of school transportation, a review of some of the reactions to the trend may be helpful in the understanding to the whole problem. Numerous reactions, favorable and otherwise toward the changes in the school transportation laws, have been made. The following quotations sum the feeling up rather well:

> For:
> "The present law is helpful to equalize the school burden."
> "If some state transportation is not paid there will be a demand for the opening of many small schools. Because pupils are being paid transportation and tuition it has been possible to close 35 schools in this county."
> "If the state does not pay transportation, many parents in rural areas will find it impossible to send their children to school under present economic conditions."
> "It has been a blessing to a great number of rural people."
>
> Against:
> "People in general have been spoiled by receiving money for transportation and think the district owes them a living. Several districts pay parents for transportation and the children walk to school."
> "This transportation has become a racket. The first objective should be to provide money enough to maintain 9 months of school and if there is any money left pay it for transportation."[8]

The biennal report entitled "Your Schools Today, Montana, 1948-50", published by the State Department of Public Instruction included a survey of expenditures by counties for 1949-50. Using this information with

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[8] Montana Taxpayer, December, 1937, Vol.II, No.7, p. 7.

the school population, area of the county, and the 1950 population, the author made a comparison using ten counties. These counties were selected because they are similar to Hill County in area, population, and school enrollment. Blaine and Chouteau counties were selected because they are neighboring counties. This information is included in TABLE III on page 31. A further analysis of the transportation costs listed in TABLE III reveals that the counties with high transportation costs such as Blaine, Carbon, Chouteau, Fergus, and Valley operate extensive bus routes to serve the families living in rural areas. A study of the area, population and school enrollment of Lake County will reveal why that county operates 44 school busses.

TABLE IV, pages 33 and 34, shows the 81 per cent increase in transportation expenditures from the $1,115,902 of 1940-41 to $2,093,397 for 1949-50. In analyzing the table which was taken from the Montana Taxpayer, December, 1950, published by the Montana Taxpayers' Association, such factors as the number of pupils transported and the type of transportation must be taken into consideration. Many persons would make the conclusion that Ravalli and Yellowstone counties are operating their transportation systems much more efficiently than Lincoln and Missoula counties which have the

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES FOR TEN COUNTIES

County	Area (Sq. Mi.)	Population	School Enrollment	Transportation Expenditures
Blaine	4,267	8,473	1,897	$60,229
Carbon	2,070	10,106	2,043	56,227
Chouteau	3,920	6,908	1,256	51,000
Custer	3,765	12,623	2,023	15,556
Dawson	2,358	9,047	1,725	24,615
Fergus	4,250	13,963	2,502	52,204
HILL	2,944	14,281	2,138	37,753
Lake	1,500	13,767	3,189	114,264
Park	2,627	11,974	2,263	28,413
Valley	5,082	11,320	2,416	64,872

highest average per pupil costs. As an example, Yellowstone County school transportation costs of $86,306 are about one-third more than Missoula County's $60,791 but Yellowstone County transports four times as many students as Missoula County. Yellowstone County's larger number of pupils transported makes the average cost per pupil smaller.

K. W. Bergan, in his annual school transportation report for 1949-50, stated that there is a growing sparsity of rural populations:

> This usually comes from the increase in the size of the rural economic unit. This increase in the size of the ranch or farm has followed the mechanization of ranch production. Such changes are natural and according to laws of economics in industry. When the school population becomes too small to maintain a school then it is sensible to assume that it is the proper thing for two schools to consolidate their efforts and use transportation to bring the pupils to school.[9]

Also the closing of many rural schools has further increased the costs of transportation. A trip through Montana will reveal a large number of closed rural schools and with this fact there is the problem of educating the children who are still residing in that area. Many of the children are transported by busses to town schools.

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9 K. W. Bergan, "Annual Report for 1949-50, Division of School Transportation, Department of Public Instruction", p.1.

TABLE IV

SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION COSTS
1940-41 And 1949-50 [10]

County	1940-41	1949-50	Pupils Transported 1949-50	Average Cost Per Pupil 1949-50
Lincoln	$28,568	$ 63,899	521	$123
Missoula	25,693	60,791	497	122
Lewis & Clark	27,110	67,735	573	118
Jefferson	26,390	39,235	336	117
Sheridan	30,235	46,712	417	112
Carter	10,921	19,891	188	106
Mineral	8,645	15,045	142	106
Rosebud	27,872	46,124	436	106
Powell	13,696	37,423	357	105
Prarie	12,075	16,226	155	105
Chouteau	31,434	51,000	514	99
Meagher	6,593	9,118	92	99
Sweet Grass	5,627	16,184	164	99
Toole	16,825	27,402	281	98
Beaverhead	11,862	17,505	181	97
Judith Basin	17,992	29,469	308	96
Wheatland	7,366	11,053	119	93
Teton	39,174	70,841	782	91
Broadwater	8,920	23,430	260	90
Daniels	17,582	30,911	345	90
Fallon	16,268	17,441	197	89
Sanders	33,432	71,084	811	88
McCone	8,707	26,373	304	87
Golden Valley	4,381	9,491	111	86
Fergus	37,446	52,204	617	85
HILL	19,565	37,753	442	85
Glacier	24,242	47,144	567	83
Park	14,307	28,414	346	82
Silver Bow	10,662	16,936	206	82
Stillwater	13,550	33,005	402	82
Roosevelt	41,391	49,526	609	81
Custer	9,993	15,556	194	80
Powder River	15,489	11,104	138	80
Blaine	28,048	60,229	763	79

TABLE IV (Continued)

SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION COSTS
1940-41 AND 1949-50[10]

County	1940-41	1949-50	Pupils Transported 1949-50	Average Cost Per Pupil 1949-50
Deer Lodge	$12,357	$ 23,524	301	$ 78
Gallatin	33,719	51,901	679	76
Treasure	5,321	9,312	122	76
Valley	41,501	64,872	866	75
Carbon	19,282	56,227	769	73
Richland	20,110	38,405	526	73
Granite	11,586	12,309	170	72
Madison	23,891	40,448	560	72
Pondera	15,303	31,753	451	70
Petroleum	4,261	3,462	51	68
Flathead	40,927	78,683	1,195	66
Garfield	7,743	9,009	136	66
Lake	57,943	114,264	1,757	65
Musselshell	10,945	16,093	251	64
Liberty	6,370	10,130	166	61
Dawson	19,659	24,615	418	59
Cascade	45,656	91,867	1,732	53
Big Horn	38,062	53,489	1,021	52
Phillips	15,854	19,693	393	50
Wibaux	8,320	7,047	146	48
Ravalli	32,257	73,686	1,706	43
Yellowstone	32,778	86,306	2,051	42
Totals	$1,155,906	$2,093,349	27,842	$ 75

10 Montana Taxpayer, Montana Taxpayers' Association, December, 1950, Vol. VI, No. 10, p. 4-5.

TABLE V, pages 36 and 37, shows the distribution of pupils provided transportation in 1949-50 according to the three types of transportation set up by the state legislature. There is a wide range in the number of pupils provided transportation as is shown by the 51 pupils in the sparsely populated Petroleum County to 2051 pupils in the more heavily populated Yellowstone County. It is also an interesting factor in the high school isolated category that so few pupils receive this type of transportation. This is a result of the decision of many of the counties to pay high school students individual transportation regardless of the possible isolated conditions.

There are many instances in Montana where the most efficient system of school transportation would be through the use of busses. This service will replace individual transportation in many localities as soon as the parents are ready to accept this type of service and when the county commissioners develop good programs of building and maintaining roads.

The material listed in TABLE V is given in the annual school transportation report for 1949-50 by K. W. Bergan.

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION DURING 1949-50[11]

County	Bus		Individual		Isolated		Total
	Elem.	H.S.	Elem.	H.S.	Elem.	H.s.	
Beaverhead	54	2	48	57	20		181
Big Horn	767	120	75	24	35		1,021
Blaine	437	100	181	19	26		763
Broadwater	127	101	18	7	7	5	260
Carbon	453	205	65	27	14		769
Carter					101	87	188
Cascade	1,077	424	121	103	7		1,726
Chouteau	88	45	198	155	28		514
Custer	120	6	25	4	39		194
Daniels	123	86	87	49			345
Dawson	191	23	63	101	40		418
Deer Lodge	171	109	12	1	2	6	301
Fallon			35	84	78		197
Fergus	156	63	149	169	80		617
Flathead	407	616	80	92			1,195
Gallatin	330	138	89	122			679
Garfield			54	69	13		136
Glacier	223	49	163	23	93	16	567
Golden Valley			39	37	33	2	111
Granite	85	33	34	14	4		170
HILL	66	32	241	22	81		442
Jefferson	154	129	25	1	22	5	336
Judith Basin	78	60	118	47	2	3	308
Lake	1,196	532	13	3	13		1,757
Lewis & Clark	177	202	44	8	31	111	573
Liberty			98	56	12		166
Lincoln	279	184	26	15	15	2	521
Madison	361	158	29	4	8		560
McCone	29	25	97	105	37	11	304
Meagher		7	38	30	17		92
Mineral	81	25	21	5	10		142
Missoula	312	93	73	1	18		497
Musselshell	131	24	76	10	10		251
Park	96	68	93	65	24		346

TABLE V (Continued)

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION DURING 1949-50[11]

County	Bus		Individual		Isolated		Total
	Elem.	H.S.	Elem.	H.S.	Elem.	H.S.	
Petroleum			48	3			51
Phillips	54	43	187	84	35		393
Pondera	214	74	100	61	2		451
Powder River			70	23	33	12	138
Powell	140	79	35	3	54	46	357
Prarie	43	12	37	31	32		155
Ravalli	1,252	427	24	3			1,706
Richland	213	103	169	29	12		526
Roosevelt	364	77	104	53	9	2	609
Rosebud	200	82	93	41	16	4	436
Sanders	553	205	34	10	3	6	811
Sheridan	76	42	94	77	74	54	417
Silver Bow	126	49	11	8	11	1	196
Still-water	173	65	79	71	14		402
Sweet Grass		21	39	70	34		164
Teton	369	203	133	13	62	2	782
Toole	116	52	102	5	6		281
Treasure	64	31	15	3	3	6	122
Valley	340	211	214	95	6		866
Wheatland	31		47	30	7	4	119
Wibaux	24	13	35	56	18		109
Yellow-stone	1,404	516	67	29	21	14	2,051
Totals	13,525	5,954	4,265	2,327	1,372	399	27,789

Total Pupils ---- Bus ---------- 19,479
Individual --- 6,592
Isolated ----- 1,771

11 K. W. Bergan, "Annual Report for 1949-50, Division of School Transportation, Department of Public Instruction", pp. 8-9.

School transportation in Montana is growing rapidly and TABLE VI, page 39, gives an overall picture of the transportation costs for 1949-50. With the increasing demand on school transportation, K. W. Bergan stated,

> Generally it can be concluded that the school districts cannot be expected to assume full responsibility for all the various costs of transportation in all its ramifications. Parents must assume some of the obligations and responsibilities which arise in connection with the education of their children. Some of the demands placed upon schools for transportation are unreasonable and excessive and entirely outside the scope of the law.[12]

The growth of school transportation is a means of providing equal educational opportunity. The administration of the school transportation program is difficult and the State Department of Public Instruction through the office of supervisor of transportation is attempting to set up an efficient program. School transportation is becoming more important because the school population has become more sparse and facilities have become more centralized. By analyzing the tremendous increase in transportation costs and the number of children receiving transportation this service is due to grow in importance, particularly in a state like Montana, where the movement from rural areas to urban areas has been so definite.

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12 Ibid., pp,24-25.

TABLE VI

SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION COSTS[13]

	Private Owned Contract Busses	School District Owned Busses	Common Carriers Contracting To Transport School Children
Total Number of Busses	431	196	26
Total Bus Miles	3,410,988	1,837,062	151,018
Total Pupil Miles	20,844,675	7,729,290	973,174
Total Cost	$945,536	$441,433	$50,663
Cost Per Bus Mile	$ .28	$ .24	$ .34
Cost Per Pupil Mile	$ .04	$ .03	$ .05
Total Number of Pupils Transported On These Busses:			
Elementary	8,215	4,068	1,247
High School	3,895	1,638	421

	Individual Payments In Lieu of Transportation	Increased Transportation Due To Isolation
Total Number of Pupils		
Elementary	4,202	1,372
High School	2,226	400
Total Pupil Miles	24,426,720	10,016,280
Total Cost	$343,726.10	$249,052.10
Cost Per Pupil Per Day	$ .30	$ .78

13 K. W. Bergan, "Annual Report for 1949-50, Division of School Transportation, Department of Public Instruction", p.24.

CHAPTER IV

HILL COUNTY SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION COSTS

During the 1949-50 school term, 434 Hill County children received transportation of one of the three types -- bus, individual, or isolated. This was 22 per cent of the number of children enrolled in the public schools in Hill County during that year.

Over one half of Hill County's 14,281 persons is centered in Havre, while about 1,500 persons are located in the towns of Box Elder, Kremlin, Gildford, Rudyard, and Inverness. A glance at MAP III, page 64, which shows the location of each child receiving individual and isolated transportation payments, makes evident the fact that Hill County's rural population is sparse. In order that their children may receive a good education, many parents have purchased homes in town. This factor has also helped to alleviate the problem of transporting the children to school during severe winter weather, over rough roads, and around river or mountain barriers.

The following information concerning the school busses and school bus drivers was obtained from the district superintendents and school district clerks. The author travelled on the bus routes and was able to obtain information on road conditions, drivers' reactions, length of time the youngsters were on the bus, and some

of the conditions under which the children were realizing the opportunities of education. The bus routes were on file in the office of the county superintendent. TABLES VII, VIII, IX, XII, and XIII, on pages 55, 56, 57, 71, and 72, were compiled from the first and second semester transportation summaries, which listed the school district, number of pupils receiving payments, attendance, and total cost. They were obtained from the offices of the Hill County Superintendent of Schools and the state supervisor of transportation. Using the number of pupils receiving payments and the total cost, the author figured the cost per pupil per bus mile in the bus transportation summary and the cost per pupil in the individual and isolated summaries. A determination of the cost per pupil helped in analyzing the overall transportation costs.

A - BUS TRANSPORTATION --- SIX REGULAR ROUTES

Four school districts in Hill County -- Havre, Hingham, Inverness, and Rudyard, operated school bus routes in 1949-50. Looking at each route as to the road conditions, size of bus, length of route, and the number of passengers makes it easier to analyze some of the problems that the school authorities must face in these districts.

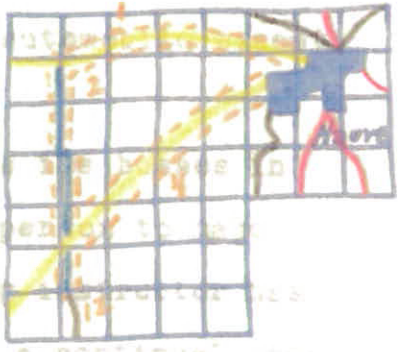
1 - Havre Bus Routes

Havre, School District #16, operates two school bus routes. The west Havre route, which is shown on FIGURE III, page 43, covers 14 miles of oiled road and 5 1/2 miles of maintained high graded road. The bus in operation was in excellent condition -- the driver's only reaction was a complaint regarding the hardness of his seat. Most of the children get on the bus at Fort Assiniboine, though the bus does pick up the children living in Highland Park who are attending the first, second, or third grades. The school district does not receive reimbursement for transporting the children from Highland Park as they are within the three mile limit set by the state law. The school district trustees stated that the distance from Highland Park to the nearest school is too far for the younger children to walk, especially during the severe winter weather, so the bus picks up the children on the way to the schools in the morning and returns them after school.

The south Havre route, which is shown on FIGURE IV, page 45, covers 9 1/2 miles of well maintained gravel road. The Havre school district trustees are considering discontinuing this route as all but one of the families

FIGURE III

HAVRE WEST ROUTE



Highway -----
Gravel ------
High Grade --
Common Low Grade ------
Numbers ----- Pupils At Stops

Bus Information

Cost of Operation
- Fuel ---------- $185
- Mainenance ------ $432
- Insurance ------- $375
- Depreciation ---- $490

Bus in Operation
- Make ---------- Dodge
- Seating Capacity ----- 42
- Age of Bus ---- 3 years
- Original Cost - $4100
- Liability Insurance ---- $10,000-$30,000

Bus Driver Information

- Name ------- Fred Ritter
- Age -------- 30 years
- Salary ----- $600
- Years of Driving Experience- 16 years
- Years of Bus Driving Experience- 3 years
- Year Took Driver's Test ------ 1948
- Other Work ------ Teacher

are purchasing homes in Havre. The bus, as the picture shows, is a stretch-out type of bus and the author considers it as the most comfortable riding school bus in Hill County for both the pupils and the driver. This is because it is constructed like an automobile except for length.

The Havre school district keeps its busses in good operating condition by hiring a person to make necessary repairs. The trade training instructor has been hired as he is available to make a continual check on the busses.

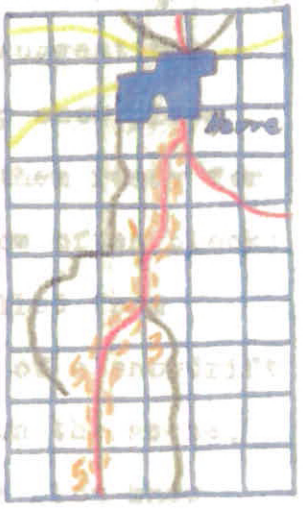
2 - Hingham Bus Route

Hingham, School District #24, has been operating a school bus service for two years but its value has been proven as after the first year of operation the route was extended and during the past year more requests have been made to add several more miles to the route. During the first year, the Hingham school district used a 1946 Ford panel type but, after one year of successful operation, the district purchased the bus pictured on page 47.

The Hingham bus route, shown on FIGURE V, page 47, covers 15 miles of dirt road. Most of the route is on

FIGURE IV

HAVRE SOUTH ROUTE



Highway ----- ——
Gravel ------ ——
High Grade -- ——
Common Low
Grade ------ ——
Numbers ----- Pupils
At Stops

Bus Information

Cost of Operation
Fuel ---------- $165
Maintenance ----- $211
Insurance ------- $300
Depreciation ---- $474
Bus in Operation
Make ---------- Ford
Seating
Capacity ----- 15
Age of Bus ---- 3 years
Original Cost - $3793
Liability
Insurance ---- $10,000-
$30,000

Bus Driver Information

Name ------- Al Gerstenberger
Age -------- 46 years
Salary ----- $360
Years of
Driving
Experience- 21 years
Years of
Bus
Driving
Experience- 2 years
Year Took
Driver's
Test ------ 1949
Other
Work ------ Teacher

a high graded road which is in need of better maintenance. Part of the route goes over a stretch of road which has not been maintained for so long that now all that remains are the two automobile tracks. Jack Hendrickson, Hingham driver, commented that one of his suggestions would be that the county commissioners keep snow plows in areas served by school busses and have them ready for operation during the winter months when snow often blocks the road. He stated that one day he shovelled from 8:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M. to get the bus out of a snowdrift and as he finished the snow plow appeared on the scene. His gripe was that the operator of the snow plow knew the road conditions but was too independent and did not seem to care if the bus drivers were able to make the route or not.

The Hingham school bus is maintained at the local garage.

3 - Inverness Bus Routes

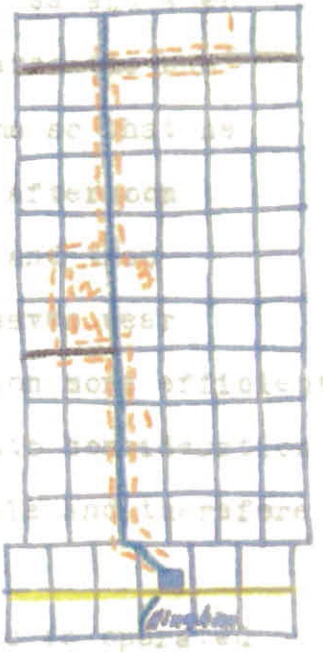
Inverness, School District #28, has been providing school bus service since 1935. The district operates two school busses and is planning to extend the routes. The north route, FIGURE VI, page 49, covers 16 miles of graded road which is usually in need of a good maintenance job. During the spring months after the

FIGURE V

HINGHAM ROUTE

(Bus pictured is not the bus in operation during 1949-50. This bus was purchased in 1950.)

(This information pertains to the Ford panel type bus in operation in 1949-50)



Highway -----
Gravel ------
High Grade --
Common Low Grade ------
Numbers ----- Pupils At Stops

Bus Information

Cost of Operation
- Fuel ---------- $270
- Maintenance ----- $507
- Insurance ------- $125
- Depreciation ---- $200

Bus in Operation
- Make ---------- Ford
- Seating Capacity ----- 16
- Age of Bus ---- 4 years
- Original Cost - $1600
- Liability Insurance ---- $25,000-$30,000

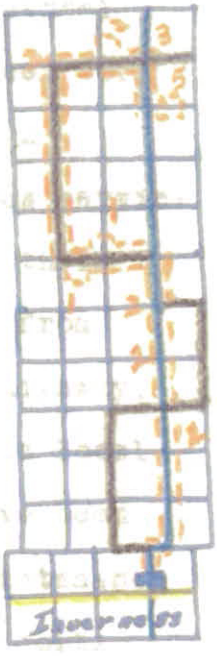
Bus Driver Information
- Name ------- Jack Hendrickson
- Age -------- 22 years
- Salary ----- $600
- Years of Driving Experience- 12 years
- Years of Bus Driving Experience- 2 years
- Year Took Driver's Test ------ 1949
- Other Work ------ Teacher

thawing season the roads are very rough and are often washed out in some places. Dean McFadden, driver on this route, keeps his automobile in Inverness and when he completes the route in the morning, leaves the bus in Inverness and drives his automobile home so that he is able to take care of his farm. In the afternoon he returns to Inverness in the automobile and then completes his bus route. This procedure saves wear on the bus and makes the bus route operation more efficient. The school district trustees have taken into consideration the fact that the driver uses his automobile and therefore include that in his salary.

The other Inverness school bus route is operated on about the same plan as the north bus route. Joe Sweitzer, who replaced Emery Adams as driver, keeps his automobile in Inverness as does Mr. McFadden. This route, FIGURE VII, page 51, covers nine miles of graded road which is often in need of maintenance. This school bus is also used in making the afternoon trip to Rudyard, transporting two Inverness children home. Since the Inverness High School was discontinued, most to the children have been attending Joplin High School in Liberty County, but two of the high school students decided to attend Rudyard High School. The school district trustees of the Inverness and Rudyard districts

FIGURE VI

INVERNESS NORTH ROUTE



Highway -----
Gravel ------
High Grade --
Common Low
Grade ------
Numbers ----- Pupils
At Stops

Bus Information	
Cost of Operation	
Fuel	$569
Maintenance	In above
Insurance	$69
Depreciation	$470
Bus in Operation	
Make	International
Seating Capacity	25
Age of Bus	2 years
Original Cost	$2506
Liability Insurance	$10,000-$30,000

Bus Driver Information	
Name	Dean McFadden
Age	34 years
Salary	$1620
Years of Driving Experience	18 years
Years of Bus Driving Experience	3 years
Year Took Driver's Test	1947
Other Work	Farmer

met and decided that the Rudyard bus would make the morning trip and an Inverness bus would make the afternoon trip. This procedure of transporting two high school students by bus from Inverness to Rudyard has been very costly but with the closing of the Inverness High School, the school trustees agreed to provide bus service to Rudyard for students who desired to continue their education at Rudyard High School. The distance from Inverness to Rudyard is six miles and is oiled highway.

The Inverness busses are maintained at the local garage. Maintenance costs for this district have been high and could be reduced some by the better maintenance of the roads which would be a reduction in such costs as welding and the tires would last longer.

4 - Rudyard Bus Route

Rudyard, School District #26, has successfully operated a school bus service for two years. The Rudyard school bus route, FIGURE VIII, page 53, covers 13 miles of well maintained high graded gravel road. This road is one of the best in Hill County except for the oiled highways. This route is the best one in western Hill County. Parents, living north of Rudyard, requested an extension of the route after the first year of operation

FIGURE VII

INVERNESS EAST WEST ROUTE

Highway -----
Gravel ------
High Grade --
Common Low Grade ------
Numbers ----- Pupils At Stops

Bus Information		Bus Driver Information	
Cost of Operation		Name -------	Emery Adams
Fuel ----------	$861	Age --------	36 years
Maintenance -----	In above		
Insurance -------	$73	Salary -----	$1710
Depreciation ----	$451	Years of Driving Experience-	21 years
Bus in Operation		Years of Bus Driving Experience-	1 year
Make ----------	International	Year Took Driver's Test ------	1949
Seating Capacity -----	16	Other Work ------	Farmer
Age of Bus ----	New		
Original Cost -	$4100		
Liability Insurance ----	$20,000-$30,000		

and this spring the Rudyard school trustees ordered a larger bus for this route so that it can be extended about five miles. The most costly feature of the school bus service in the Rudyard district is the six mile trip to Inverness and back each morning when the passenger load is only two high school students.

The Rudyard school bus is maintained at the local garages.

B - SUMMARY OF REGULAR BUS ROUTES

TABLE VII, page 55, was compiled to give an overall view of the six regular school busses in operation in Hill County and a comparison of the bus and bus driver information. An analysis of TABLE VII shows the following: average bus driver's age -- 32 years, average salary -- $1069, average years of driving experience -- 19 years, and average years of bus driving experience -- 2 years. The recency of the years in which the bus drivers took the driving tests is a result of the state law now requiring a chauffer's license for bus drivers which may be obtained if the driving test is passed. The even split between teachers and farmers as bus drivers shows that the persons in these two types of work are available for bus driving as their hours may be arranged to meet

FIGURE VIII

RUDYARD ROUTE

Highway -----
Gravel ------
High Grade --
Common Low Grade ------
Numbers ----- Pupils At Stops

Bus Information

Cost of Operation
- Fuel ---------- $800
- Maintenance ----- None
- Insurance ------- $83
- Depreciation ---- $425

Bus in Operation
- Make ----------Chevrolet
- Seating Capacity ----- 24
- Age of Bus ---- New
- Original Cost - $3746
- Liability Insurance ---- $10,000-$30,000

Bus Driver Information

- Name ------- Donald Aspevig
- Age -------- 24 years
- Salary ----- $1521
- Years of Driving Experience- 15 years
- Years of Bus Driving Experience- None
- Year Took Driver's Test ------ 1948
- Other Work ------ Farmer

the necessary bus schedule. The Rudyard school district receives bids for bus driving which are higher in proportion to Inverness's bids. During the first two years only one person bid for the Rudyard job.

In Hill County the average school bus route was 31 1/2 miles in length; average fuel and maintenance, $667; average insurance, $171; average bus depreciation, $418; and average original cost, $3247. The fuel and maintenance costs vary with the size of the bus and the type of roads. Havre's higher insurance rates include the costs for liability insurance. The rates set for depreciation are comparable except for the Hingham bus which was older and it did not have a purchase price in comparison with the other busses. The ages of the busses shows that there is a definite interest in bus service.

An analysis of the Hill County costs of bus transportation is possible by using the transportation summaries for 1949-50. These data are listed in TABLE VIII, page 56. All of the bus routes have a cost per pupil per bus mile of $ .01 or $ .02 except for the trip that the Rudyard bus takes to Inverness. Rudyard lists the Inverness trip as a separate route for reimbursement while Inverness includes it on one of the routes.

TABLE VII

SUMMARY OF BUS DRIVERS
AND BUS INFORMATION

	I	II	III	IV	V	VII
Drivers						
Age	30	46	22	34	36	24
Salary	$600	$360	$600	$1620*	$1710*	$1521
Yrs. of Driving Exper.	16	21	12	18	21	15
Yrs. of Bus Drive. Exper.	3	2	2	3	1	0
Year Took Test	1948	1949	1949	1947	1949	1948
Other Work	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Farmer	Farmer	Farmer
Busses						
Distance of Routes (Both Ways)	39	19	30	32	30	38
Fuel and Main.	$617	$376	$777	$569	$861	$800
Insurance	$375	$300	$125	$ 69	$ 73	$ 83
Deprec.	$490	$474	$200	$470	$451	$425
Make of Bus	Dodge	Ford	Ford	International	International	Chevrolet
Seating Cap.	42	15	16	25	16	24
Age	3	3	4	2	New	New
Orig. Cost	$4,100	$3,793	$1,600	$2,506	$3,739	$3,746
Liability Insur.	10-30	10-30	25-30	10-20	20-40	10-20

* Includes cost of automobile operation

* I - Havre West Route
II - Havre South Route
III- Hingham Route
IV - Inverness North Route
V - Inverness East West Route
VI - Rudyard Route

TABLE VIII

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL BUS COSTS

District	No. of Pupils	Miles	Cost	Cost Per Mile (Reimbursement)	Cost Per Pupil Per Bus Mile
		(First Semester)			
#16-Havre	19	3393	$678.90	$ .20	$ .01
#16-Havre	14	3219	643.80	.20	.01
#24-Hingham	11	4264	852.80	.20	.02
#26-Rudyard	22	4980	996.00	.20	.01
#26-Rudyard	2	1245	249.00	.20	.10
#28-Inverness	10	3520	704.00	.20	.01
#28-Inverness	20	3344	668.80	.20	.01
		(Second Semester)			
#16-Havre	19	3627	$725.40	$ .20	$ .01
#16-Havre	14	3441	688.20	.20	.01
#24-Hingham	11	4940	988.00	.20	.02
#26-Rudyard	22	5640	1128.00	.20	.01
#26-Rudyard	2	1410	282.00	.20	.10
#28-Inverness	10	3560	712.00	.20	.02
#28-Inverness	20	3382	676.40	.20	.01

In determining the scope of school bus transportation in Hill County, TABLE IX was compiled to show the extent of this service in the four districts.

TABLE IX

PER CENT OF PUPILS TRAVELING ON BUSSES IN EACH DISTRICT

District	No. of Children Attending School	No. of Children Riding Busses	Per Cent
#16-Havre	1445	36	2.5
#24-Hingham	79	11	13.9
#26-Rudyard	115	24	20.9
#28-Inverness	75	30	40.0

The Inverness school district trustees have expanded the bus service in that district as a means of maintaining enrollment. The 40 per cent riding busses in this district shows the development of this service. Many families in this district would move to Havre or Great Falls rather than face the problem of transporting their children to school.

MAP II, page 58, shows the school bus routes and also the type of roads. The road information was taken from a map drawn by the Hill County surveyor.

C - SCHOOL BUS COSTS, BUS SAFETY, EXTENSION OF BUS ROUTES, AND LENGTH TIME PUPILS RIDE BUSSES

One of the main problems in school bus transportation is the original cost of the bus. The state law now provides that a bus depreciation section may be set up in the budget so that the school districts may place money in a fund which will be used to replace the bus after a number of years, usually set at about eight years. Some states and counties are trying a method of centralized school bus purchasing as a means of making the program more economical. Hill County school districts may be able to reduce costs if the county or state had a centralized bus purchasing agency. Local dealers, who are now selling the busses, could still handle the sales under a centralized program.

Safety is one of the most important factors in school transportation and at the present time the school districts do not receive reimbursement payments if the busses do not pass the inspection made by the state highway patrol. Brakes, lights, and other equipment need careful attention and if the inspections were made twice a year, school administrators and bus drivers would be more alert to the need of proper maintenance.

If the patrolman inspects the bus in the early part of the school year and it passes inspection, too often there is a tendency to ignore some of the defects which occur during the year, and they are not repaired until the next annual inspection. If there was a semiannual inspection and no advance notice, there would be an increase in the safety of the children riding the busses. The busses in Hill County passed the inspection program set up by the state highway patrol.

After traveling the bus routes, the author could see several possibilities of expansion of bus routes which would result in better educational facilities and a reduction in costs. In the areas of Rudyard and Hingham, two rural schools could be closed and the children transported to the town schools. The Rudyard bus route could be extended about five miles north and the children attending the Oreana school could ride the Rudyard bus. The Hingham school bus goes one mile from the Mariner school and all of the pupils attending this school cross the road on which the Hingham bus travels. There are about ten children attending each of these rural schools and such a program would require larger busses than are now in operation, but through a joint district arrangement this could be properly handled.

The elimination of the Creana and Mariner schools would reduce the expense for these districts and the town schools would provide better school facilities for the children.

On the days that the author traveled on the busses, the longest any children rode the busses was forty minutes. Sometimes during the severe winter weather and days when there has been rain, the children may ride for longer periods but this was seldom more than an hour. The state legislature has considered the time factor as is shown by school legislation. The School Laws of the State Of Montana, 1949, under Chapter 152, Transportation, Section 7 (k) states:

> No child attending public elementary school shall be required by any school board to ride a school bus, under average road conditions, more than one (1) hour per trip of said child in said school bus, without the consent of the child's parents or guardian.[1]

D - ROCKY BOY AGENCY BUS ROUTE

Another school bus besides those at Havre, Hingham, Inverness, and Rudyard, is also in operation but the financing is under a different arrangement and it is not controlled by any school district. This

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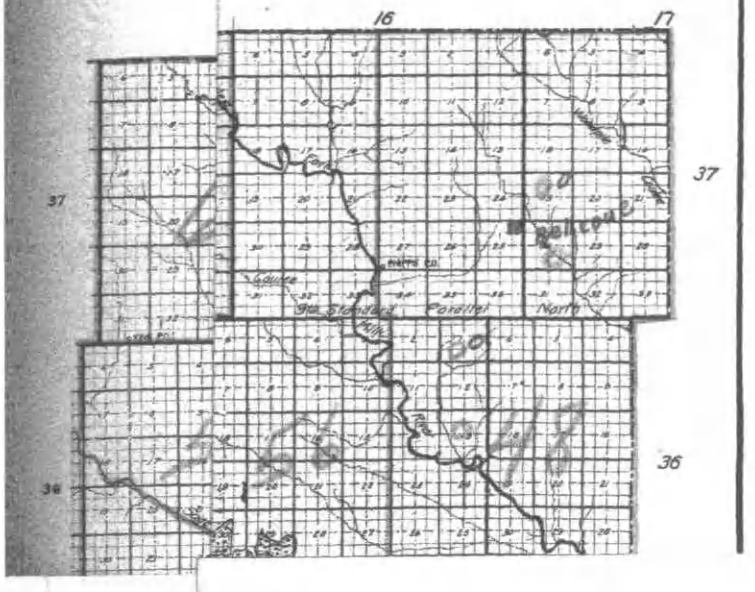
[1] School Laws of the State Of Montana, 1949, p.50.

example is interesting as it shows how a group of people through their own initiative are able to solve an important problem in educating their children.

The white children residing at the Rocky Boy Indian Agency are unable to attend the government schools so they are enrolled in the Box Elder school. The agency is isolated in the southwest corner of Havre School District #16 and the best road is to Box Elder so the Golberg, Overdier, Allen, and Crawford families receive transportation payments on the basis of the isolated schedule as listed on pages 17 and 18. The parents have made arrangements with the federal government to use one of the government busses and they pay the bus driver's salary. The United States Government furnishes the fuel and pays all maintenance costs. Insurance is carried on the bus and all efforts are made to keep the bus in proper operating condition.

The children of the four families ride the bus to Box Elder and on the return trip to Rocky Boy, the bus picks up the Indian children attending the agency schools. On the afternoon trip the bus returns the Indian children to their homes on the way to Box Elder and then picks up the children from the agency families and takes them to Rocky Boy.

LOCATION O



The purpose of individual transportation payments is to provide some assistance to rural families who must transport their children to school. The schedule is listed on page 16.

TABLE X, page 66, lists the expenditures by districts as shown by the first and second semester transportation summaries. In using the available material, the author determined the cost per pupil.

The costs range from $20.25 for one child in the Orrana district to $51.60 for one child in the Redwing district. In analyzing this range, there must be a a consideration of the distance from school and the attendance record of the child as payments are made only on the days the child attends school.

The mixed-individual transportation costs are also listed on TABLE X but this program was used only during the first semester. This program was more complicated and made it more difficult to make computations so during the second semester it was included in individual transportation.

F - ISOLATED TRANSPORTATION

Isolated transportation is a program of reimbursement for families who live in such inaccessible places

TABLE X

SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL TRANSPORTATION

District	No. of* Pupils	Cost	Cost Per Pupil	No. of** Pupils	Cost	Cost Per Pupil
Grainbelt	14	$ 203.82	$14.56	14	$ 191.76	$13.70
Pride of the Prarie	7	83.16	11.88	9	118.32	13.15
Shambo	2	63.09	31.55	2	66.12	33.06
Box Elder	13	315.24	24.25	22	542.31	24.64
Havre	61	1,983.90	32.50	78	2,184.93	28.01
Faber	1	22.80	22.80	1	25.20	25.20
Fresno	12	183.09	15.26	12	183.80	15.32
Kremlin	12	384.36	32.03	16	434.04	27.13
Gildford	6	158.70	26.45	8	194.52	24.32
Goldstone	3	68.04	23.68	4	103.32	25.83
Hingham	8	300.66	37.58	9	348.23	38.69
Rudyard	15	502.20	33.48	21	717.87	34.18
Inverness	7	137.40	19.63	10	225.81	22.58
Center	3	59.10	19.70	3	60.44	20.21
Packer	4	50.82	12.71	4	55.62	13.91
Minneota	2	28.77	14.39	2	27.60	13.80
Mariner	4	87.06	21.77	4	92.16	23.04
St. Joe	1	23.70	23.70	1	26.70	26.70
Lakeview	6	93.42	15.57	6	95.28	15.88
Oreana	1	20.25	20.25	1	21.60	21.60
Miller - Spring Coulee	8	163.86	20.48	8	169.50	21.19
Cottonwood	13	264.66	20.36	13	240.30	18.48
Redwing	1	51.60	51.60	1	55.20	55.20
Out-of-County				2	45.18	22.59
Mixed - Individual (First Semester)						
Pride of the Prarie	2	$ 28.38	$14.19			
Box Elder	11	151.92	13.81			
Havre	7	118.54	16.93			
Kremlin	4	72.87	18.22			
Gildford	2	25.25	12.63			
Goldstone	1	22.12	22.12			
Hingham	1	30.06	30.06			
Rudyard	7	149.93	21.42			
Inverness	3	70.28	23.43			
Rathbun	7	143.84	20.55			
Cottonwood	2	37.17	18.59			
Out-of-County	2	48.16	24.08			

* First Semester ** Second Semester

that they must move away from home so that the children may attend school. The mountainous area in the southeastern section of Hill County has forced many families to move to town so that they are closer to educational facilities. The Milk River and the breaks surrounding it in some areas have also forced families, with school-age children, to move to town.

Isolated transportation presents a problem to school administrators as this program is the most difficult to administer. Many persons make claims for isolated transportation with the idea that since it is money coming from taxes they want as much as it is possible to receive. The Montana State Department of Public Instruction set up the suggested degree of isolation schedule as listed on pages 17 and 18 so that school trustees could more easily determine the proper payments.

All claims for isolated transportation must be accompanied by a statement of the reason for being eligible under this program. Some examples of reasons given for requesting isolated transportation payments were located in the transportation files in the office of the Hill County Superintendent of Schools and were as follows:

Distance from nearest school -- 12 miles
"Children have to attend school in Inverness due to roads impassable most of school year. Several bad coulees to go through -- 34 miles to Inverness."

Distance from nearest school -- 6 miles
"Moved to Havre so child can attend school during school year. Roads to nearest school impassable during winter months. Additional expense incurred by moving family to school."

Distance from nearest school -- 25 miles
"Live in isolated mountain district. Cannot travel 25 miles to school. Children board and room in Havre."

Two school districts, 16 and 19, have made attempts to set up isolation schedules which fit the situations in their area better than does the state suggested schedule. An example of this is in Kremlin, School District #19. Several families, who were eligible to receive transportation payments under the isolated schedule, were not satisfied with the state proposed program so they held a meeting with the school district trustees and a schedule was set up which was satisfactory for both groups and was given approval by Knute W. Bergan, state supervisor of transportation. The schedule as worked out by this group is listed on TABLE XI, page 69.

Three school districts; 9, 10, and 11, which were located north of District #16, were abandoned in 1949 and were annexed to the Havre school district. The

TABLE XI

KREMLIN ISOLATED SCHEDULE

Miles	Per Month	
12 plus	$15.00	for first child
	10.00	for second child
	5.00	for third child
7 - 12	$10.00	for first child
	10.00	for second child
	5.00	for third child
5 - 7	$10.00	for first child

taxpayers in these districts had voted in favor of a high transportation levy at the school district elections and they were afraid that this voted money would be used by School District #16 as a result of their being annexed to that district. These patrons felt that their conditions were deserving of some type of increased rate so they met with the Havre school trustees and set up a schedule which also met with the approval of Knute W. Bergan. TABLE XII, page 71, lists the schedule.

TABLE XIII, page 72, shows the isolated transportation costs as taken from the first and second semester transportation summaries. From this material the figuring of the cost per pupil shows a large range as Kremlin's cost per pupil during the first semester was $48.01 as compared to North Star's $130.50. The reasons for this marked difference are, (1) the larger number of students receiving payments in the Kremlin district, (2) the children in the North Star district received maximum payments because of distance and road conditions, and (3) the four children in the North Star district had perfect attendance records.

G - PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL SCHEDULE

Knute W. Bergan stated, "The individual transportation program needs considerable study because it is

TABLE XII

HAVRE ISOLATED SCHEDULE

Family	No. of Children	Regular			Increased		
		Daily	6 Weeks	Year	Daily	6 Weeks	Year
Callaghan	1	$.60	$18.00	$36.00	$1.50	$45.00	$180.00
Dockter	1	.48	14.40	28.80	1.50	45.00	180.00
Hellebust	1	.48	14.40	28.80	1.50	45.00	180.00
Jewell	1	.48	14.40	28.80	1.50	45.00	180.00
Knudson	3	.84	25.20	50.40	2.40	72.00	288.00
Mork	2	.60	18.00	36.00	2.10	63.00	252.00
Skram	1	.48	14.40	28.80	1.50	45.00	180.00

Regular rate ----- first and sixth six weeks
Increased rate --- second, third, fourth, and fifth six weeks

TABLE XIII

SUMMARY OF ISOLATED TRANSPORTATION COSTS

District	No. of* Pupils	Cost	Cost Per Pupil	No. of** Pupils	Cost	Cost Per Pupil
Grainbelt	7	$ 412.80	$ 58.97	7	$ 396.30	$ 56.61
Pride of the Prarie	5	327.00	65.40	5	350.10	70.02
Box Elder	1	130.50	130.50	1	132.00	132.00
Lawlor	3	189.60	63.20	3	209.40	69.80
Havre	19	1,458.20	76.75	18	1,414.95	78.61
Faber	4	355.95	88.99	4	369.60	89.90
Fresno	8	450.15	56.27	8	427.20	53.40
Kremlin	18	864.24	48.01	17	841.25	49.49
Gildford	4	226.80	56.70	4	249.00	62.25
North Star	4	522.00	130.50	4	538.50	134.63
St. Joe	1	108.75	108.75	1	108.75	108.75
Free Soil	5	383.55	76.71	4	407.00	101.75
Redwing	2	175.35	87.68	2	190.50	95.25

not always equitable and probably a better means of reimbursement can be developed."[2] Following this idea the author used three rural districts and two town districts as a basis for a schedule which would use a flat rate of seven cents per mile one way. Most of the school transportation today is by automobile and it costs as much to transport one child as it does two or three children in the same family.

TABLE XIV, page 74, was compiled from material listed on the second semester transportation summary for Hill County. In cases where more than one child attended school, the attendance record of the child attending the most days was used as a basis of determining the payment as this follows the present method of using the child with the best attendance record for the highest rate. Twelve miles was used as the top distance as in most schedules there must be a ceiling or the payments will become unreasonable.

In comparing totals for the flat rate of seven cents and the costs for 1949-50, the difference is larger where the programs are more extensive. Using a flat rate makes computation of payments easier under this plan.

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2 K. W. Bergan, "Annual Report for 1949-50, Division of School Transportation, Department of Public Instruction", p. 7.

TABLE XIV

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL SCHEDULE

School District And Family	Pupils Elem.	H.S.	Miles To Transport	No. of Days In Attendance	Cost at Seven Cents	1949-50 Cost
Shambo #5						
Faber	1		4	86	$ 24.08	$ 25.80
Kallenberger	1		7	84	42.16	40.32
					$ 66.24	$ 66.12
Box Elder #13						
Apeland	1		8	89	$ 49.84	$ 42.72
Belcourt	4		7	74	36.26	59.76
Bitz	1		7	90	44.10	43.20
Bitz	2		12	90	75.60	64.80
Bitz	1		7	92	45.08	44.16
Rossette	4	2	3	82	17.22	53.20
Smith		1	12	91	76.44	54.60
Stewart	1	2	12	94	78.96	67.56
Walls	1		15	94	78.96	56.40
					$502.46	$486.30
Faber #17						
Olson	1		3	84	$ 17.64	$ 25.20
Rudyard #26						
Adams	1	1	9	89	$ 56.07	$ 52.92
Adams	3		8	90	50.40	63.36
Avermann	1		5	93	32.55	33.48
Boucher	1		5	79	27.65	28.44
Ergenbright		2	30	95	79.80	68.40
Jackson		1	23	94	78.96	56.40
Langel		2	23	96	80.64	69.12
Lincoln		1	18	96	80.64	57.60
Rugtvedt	1		8	86	48.16	41.28
Shipman		1	25	93	78.12	55.80
Stansberry		1	26	95	79.80	57.00
Strissel		1	5	96	23.60	34.56
					$716.39	$618.36
Mariner #53						
Blake	2		8	92	$ 51.52	$ 55.20
Mangold	2		5	88	30.80	36.96
					$ 82.32	$ 92.16

H - SUMMARY OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION IN HILL COUNTY

Hill County has many problems in providing educational facilities for the children in the county. With a sparse population and barriers such as mountains, rivers, and streams, school transportation is a serious problem for school administrators.

A review of the school bus routes shows that one of the main obstacles to more efficient service is the lack of well maintained roads and school districts are planning to expand their programs so as to serve larger areas.

In districts not served by school busses the children receive transportation payments under the isolated or individual schedules. The large differences in the cost per pupil in both types is usually a result of the number of children transported and the distance from school.

The suggested schedule of a flat rate of seven cents per mile one way is a much easier method for making computations and takes into consideration that the family method of transportation costs as much for one child as for two or more children.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A review of the history of school transportation shows the rapid development of this important service which is a method of equalizing educational opportunities. From its early beginnings in Quincy, Massachusetts, to the present time, school transportation has presented many problems. School administrators throughout the United States have helped this service expand from the box wagon bus to a program which involves millions of school children.

Montana's school transportation program has followed the pattern of expansion as it has throughout the nation. The state legislature has provided for a separate division in the office of the State Department of Public Instruction, known as the supervisor of transportation, so as to develop a more efficient program. Improved schedules, different transportation forms, bus driver's manuals, bus driver conferences, and the assistance given by the supervisor of transportation have helped to improve Montana's school transportation program.

Hill County's expenditures for transportation have increased each year and the 1949-50 reports show

434 children receiving transportation payments under one of three types -- bus, individual, and isolated.

The original cost of school busses is an important factor in bus service and it has been a problem of purchasing busses. A centralized purchasing agency under a state or county program could purchase school busses in larger quantities and this would be a saving to the taxpayers.

State departments of education and school administrators have stressed the importance of safety in the school bus program. Montana has a system of annual inspection for school busses and no reimbursements will be made if the bus does not pass the inspection made by the state highway patrol. A semiannual bus inspection would increase the safety of children riding busses as school administrators and bus drivers would have to be more alert to all year upkeep of the busses. In some cases at the present time necessary repairs are ignored until the next inspection date the following fall.

Poor road conditions result in much discomfort for children and drivers who ride the bus each school day. The county commissioners and the county surveyor should discuss with school administrators the road conditions of bus routes. A cooperative planning

session could result in better roads, more satisfied children and bus drivers, and a saving in the transportation budget.

A better utilization of snow removal equipment would improve school bus service. Hill County has the equipment and the county commissioners could devise a system of snow removal on school bus routes which will make the program more efficient. Equipment and men would be stationed at Hingham, Rudyard, and Inverness and this would be a saving in the wear of this equipment in movement from Rudyard where it is now located. This program would help the problem of snow removal and also improve the winter bus schedules.

A problem constantly arising is the need for an adjustment in the individual schedule. Following K. W. Bergan's idea a schedule of seven cents per mile one way would make computations easier and it takes into consideration the fact that the vehicle costs so much to make the trip regardless of the number of passengers.

The isolated schedule does not work in every district and there should be more local cooperative planning for satisfactory schedules which take into consideration the local conditions. The state legislature needs to make a definite interpretation of the term,

"isolation". Too many abuses are found in the present program.

The extension of the Rudyard and Hingham bus routes could bring about the closing of the Oreana and Mariner schools. These two rural schools, each with an enrollment of about ten pupils, could use the town school busses and be able to provide better educational facilities for their children. The closing of these two rural schools would be a more efficient program than operating schools without good facilities.

On the basis of the survey of the transportation costs for Hill County the following recommendations are made:

1. Centralized program for purchasing school busses.
2. Semiannual bus inspection.
3. Better roads for school bus routes.
4. Utilization of snow removal equipment.
5. Set up a schedule for individual payments of seven cents per mile one way.
6. Revised isolation schedule,
7. Extension of the Rudyard and Hingham school bus routes and the closing of the Oreana and Mariner schools.

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