

SCHOOL BUS (1929 - 1959)

MR. DAVID DICK - 1035 Cambie Rd., Richmond

INTERVIEWED: February 20, 1975

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Early Buses

Mr. Dick started driving the school bus September 1929; prior to this, there were three other buses driven by: Mr. McKim (Steveston area), Mr. Jewel (Sea Island), and Mr. Aspen (Terra Nova area). Mr. Dick had the East end of Richmond and was the fourth bus driver. Shortly after this, Mr. McKim left, and Mr. Stuchberry took his run. The fourth bus started when Trites School closed and the parents wanted their children to go to Bridgeport School.

Contracts

- To begin with, the School Board awarded contracts annually.
- Later, the School Board signed three year contracts with the bus owners.

Buses

- Self-owned, owners responsible for maintenance and insurance.
- Tells of other uses of early buses.
- First buses built by owners -
 - buses inspected once or twice a year by provincial police
 - talks of process of changes in design and safety measures.
- Approximately 1939 the drivers had to purchase their own buses - no longer allowed to build their own.
- About 1949, the School Board began to purchase their own buses -
 - drivers continued to work for Board
 - Board now looked after bus maintenance & insurance.
- Buses were chartered for different groups, such as picnics, etc.
- Also used to transport chairs to different schools for special events.

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30 Years

- Tells a story of cattle on a route
- The run itself took about five hours daily to transport children to and from school -(when there were 3 runs).
- Only once schools closed due to weather - in 1937.
- In 1959 stopped driving for School Board
- Talks of a couple of incidents that happened on the bus.
- Was very happy driving the school bus.

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Roads - when Mr. Dick first started driving bus.

- Most of Westminster Highway was gravelled - ended at No. 9 Rd.
- The road was blacktopped in stages, and eventually opened through to Queensborough.
- The fog was often thick and roads narrow.

Bus Insurance

- When self-owned, insurance rates finally dropped by 2/3 due to good driving records.
- Special rates for chartered buses.

School Population

- As the school population increased, the single run of 23 children in 1929 developed to three runs in 1959 (approx. 150 children).
- Talks briefly of getting a tender.

Design of Buses

- When buses were owner-made, they had long seats.
- Manufactured buses changed seating arrangements.
- Insurance companies' limit "load" for highways .

SPECIAL EVENTS *(not on tape) -

- * Between 1938 and until the war, Mr. Dick was the only white driver to drive Japanese groups on charters.
- Mitchell school choir to Victoria for festival competition (Miss Luvik was director). Antidote re ferry.

Bus Driver Requirements

- As always a Class "A"
- * Received his license after getting a contract
- Talks of the weather when he went to New Westminster to get his license.

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