

# The Transportation System of Savard Consolidated School

In the year 1922, the Savard Consolidated School was opened to take care of the education of the many pupils who were up to that time attending small one-roomed schools in the townships of Savard, Robillard and part of Truax. On this side of the lake Grades 1-8 public and 9-10 Continuation were taught. The new transportation system came into being.

Tenders for the transportation of the students were called for—

1. This was to be a yearly contract.
2. Vehicles were to be hauled by horses.
3. Wagons were to be used in summers.
4. Sleighs were to be used in winter.

In the beginning, the school board supplied the spring wagons and sleighs for this purpose.

In the 1930's this was improved upon by the purchase of rubber tired wagons.

Some of the essential requirements were

1. A good team of horses.
2. Suitable and adequate harness.
3. A conscientious, kind, driver.

Some rules had to be adhered to by the students

- a) If a child lived on a side road, he was required to walk  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile, to meet the bus on the main road.
- b) The time to meet the bus was established by mutual agreement.

The buses were built of wood and were equipped with blankets and charcoal burning foot-warmers. Additional blankets were supplied by families. Later the warmers were replaced by small wood burning heaters.

A blanket and foot warmer were shared by a number of pupils. Methods of draping the blankets over the warmers to conserve and concentrate the heat, were often employed by the more ingenious pupils.

In those days, discipline was not a problem on the school buses because the driver could invite a troublemaker to disembark and walk behind the bus for a required distance. This treatment always proved effective on a cold, blustery night. This may sound like harsh treatment but there are still some well respected community-spirited citizens living in this community today, who often reminisce about the miles they ran behind the bus for committing some misdemeanor.

During the winter months when the roads became blocked with snow the buses were rerouted over bush trails and over farms. These roads were rolled and iced in swampy places where there was danger of them breaking through.

In the mid 40's as the roads improved and a system of snow ploughing in winter was begun, the conversion to motor buses was made.

This old system of horse-drawn buses, with their primitive blankets, foot warmers and air tight heaters seems to be a thing of the past, however one wonders why in our modern system of large motorized buses, increased educational opportunities, etc., are so many

young children required to leave home earlier in the morning than they did in those earlier years?

This is the history of the transportation system of Savard Consolidated School, the first school of its kind in Northern Ontario.

Many changes have been made, as of now the school is operating as a Public School under the jurisdiction of Temiskaming Board of Education. One more township, Sharpe, has been included in this area.

Although this may appear to be a very lowly beginning, there are many teachers, politicians, nurses, and business men who must recall with nostalgia, the fact, that they received their elementary education drawn to Savard School in one of these old horse-drawn school buses.

## TWEEDSMUIR HISTORY PROJECT

### Savard Women's Institute

As a result of a tape coming loose on Volume 1 of the Tweedsmuir History book, a much admired picture of the horse drawn school bus could be removed, and taken to a photo studio.

This was reproduced and copies sold to interested individuals. Because of the original order of 20, the price was cut from \$2.00 to \$1.15. To date, 80 have been sold. The original picture was put back into Volume 1, and the tapes repaired. Needless to say, at that price it was not a money making scheme but a service to the community.

Savard W.I. have put their Tweedsmuir History book to practical use, and also hope this public relations will pay off. The students of Charlton School viewed the books with keen interest, and hopefully the missing farm histories will be forthcoming.



June 1949, the last of the Horse Drawn School buses used in the Savard Consolidated School.