

Transportation changes during auto boom

Continued from Page 8

The Bankruptcy Court authorized the abandonment of the Farmington-Northville and Orchard Lake lines on Feb. 11, 1927. The tracks used by these lines were removed in 1928. The tracks to Detroit remained and only one freight train a day ran from Detroit to Farmington.

SINCE MANY people were dissatisfied with the bus service, the DUR contracted with the DSR to operate through-streetcar passenger service from Detroit — using DSR cars.

In September 1928, the DUR came out of receivership and changed its name to the Eastern Michigan railway.

The DSR acquired the DUR operations out to Grand River and Farmington Road. The DUR was unoffi-

cially dead.

The DSR cars, since the track south to Northville had been removed, made a loop in Farmington at the present site of the A&P store in the Farmington Mall. The passenger service could not support the two-man cars and by the time of the depression, one-man cars were used.

In 1930, the State Department said it would widen and pave Grand River if the existing interurban tracks were removed. Farmington businessmen wanted to keep the freight-moving car system and in November 1930, the real fight to save the Farmington line began.

The railroad was willing to sell out to the state for \$22,300 but enough Redford and Farmington businessmen got together and pressured the state to retain the tracks on Grand River "providing they

could do so without any operating loss."

This was according to a letter sent to the Commission of Streets and Highways on Dec. 10, 1930. These businessmen even agreed to "make up any deficit that might incur through such operations." This committee of businessmen that sent the letter listed such prominent names as Oldemeister, Warner, Power, Bond, Warner, and McGee.

ALL THE letter did was to grant an extension and, shortly thereafter, the switching facility was sold to the state and put out of use. The Eastern Michigan Railway decided to abandon the Farmington line in January 1931. As of Feb. 1, streetcar service was discontinued. Track removal began on Feb. 27, 1931. But the story doesn't end with the last cars slipping

ing out of town that winter over 50 years ago. New transportation concerns came to the forefront.

Bus service was offered at a cost of 30 cents, 10 cents more than the railway charged. Some people tried illegally to get into the people-moving business by running a "jitney" service from Five Points to Farmington. These jitneys were usually older, non-licensed, uninsured cars. These cars would speed workers to Farmington, workers that would usually take the bus. Arrests were made and fines paid. Later this idea became legal as long as the drivers

complied with the regulations made by the city commission.

No sooner did the last streetcar become a memory than auto accidents aroused a public concern for traffic safety. A 7-year-old girl was killed in March 1931 in an auto accident on Grand River and some citizens demanded a tunnel be built under the roadway by School Street. The city weighed the cost and bought a road grader instead.

The interurban, like the bus system today, was not the ultimate answer in transporting people. It was

safe, cheap and fairly fast. But as the '20s boomed and the '30s bust, the independence offered by a car moved us into a new era. This new era, however, is taking a serious look again at mass transit and its advantages. What goes around, comes around.

Sources: "The Orchard Lake Division of the Detroit United Railway," by Raymond Railway; "The Farmington Railroad in 1900," by Marilyn Gault; The Farmington Enterprise, 1930-1931.

May Festival continues this week

The Farmington High School Music Department's "May Festival" continues this week with a concert by the Symphony Orchestra, tonight at 8 p.m. in the Farmington High School auditorium.

The Farmington High Symphony Orchestra, recipient of all First Division ratings at the District Orchestra

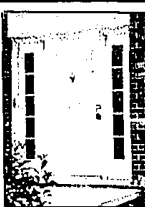
Festival, is conducted by Grant Hoemke.

Featured at the concert will be a performance of the complete Haydn Symphony No. 104, "The London Symphony." The program will also feature student soloists Lara Sipols and Melissa Maguire on violin and

LeeAnn Richardson on cello in a performance of Corelli's "Concerto Gross in F major."

Appearing as a guest will be Power Middle School director Donald Ross, who will conduct the Chamber Strings in "Diversion for String Orchestra."

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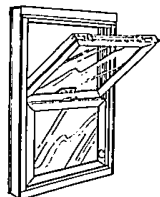


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