

Warn Students Of Unscrupulous Driver Schools

LANSING — Unscrupulous driver training schools, operating largely in the Detroit area, have built a strong case for legislation which would license and regulate such schools.

"The Detroit office of the Secretary of State has collected a mass of evidence against these shady operators, who have bulked a great number of people, principally from the inner city area, of up to hundreds of dollars each," Secretary of State James M. Hare said.

"I would urge any adult seeking a driver license for the first time to check with his local school authorities, his police or sheriff's department, or a branch office of the Secretary of State," Hare said.

"Any of these can refer the applicant to a legitimate source where he can get the needed preparation at nominal or no cost. If the applicant selects a private driver training school, he should make sure it is certified by the State Board of Education, which also certifies high school students driver programs."

LEGITIMATE DRIVER schools usually charge no more than \$50 to \$60 for the necessary training. The alternative, Hare said, may be a poorly-equipped private driver school which makes excessive charges and fails to provide adequate training.

In Detroit, Walter C. Elliott, an assistant secretary of state, gave some examples of unwarranted costs.

He cited the case of a Detroit man who paid \$200 a week for "driver training" for 18 months... a total of more than \$1,500... and still was unable to pass his driver license test.

A Negro woman paid \$50 to a man who said he knew somebody who could take care of her driver license problem. He sent her to a Secretary of State's branch office.

MANY PAY SO-CALLED "driver-training" school at \$100, \$200, or more over an extended period. Sometimes they also pay extra charges for such things as obtaining a birth certificate, now required for a first-time driver license.

Often this merely requires writing a letter to the applicant's birthplace, or establishing the birth record through long-time friends back home or family Bible records.

One applicant who finally passed his driver's test, left a \$10 bill on the clipboard in his instructor's car. The instructor turned the money in and won a department commendation.

SOME FLY-BY-NIGHTERS also offer to help those who have difficulty meeting the minimum reading requirements for a driver license... the ability to decipher traffic signs and directions... at an added fee.

Under the proposed legislation, privately-operated driver training schools would be licensed and pay an annual fee of \$100. Instructors also would be licensed at \$25 a year. Conviction of a felony or crimes involving violence, deceit, degeneracy, or moral turpitude would make operators or employees ineligible.

Each school would have to provide adequate equipment and carry specified personal liability and property damage insurance, plus a surety bond to protect students' rights.



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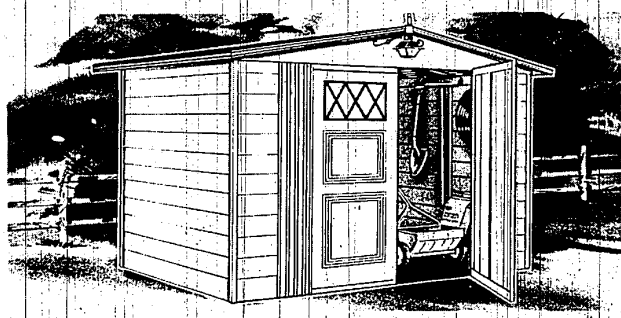
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