    * HISTORICAL NOTE: The origin of this problem is somewhat obscure. It appears to have been discussed informally among mathematicians at mathematics meetings for many years. Surprisingly little in the way of results has appeared in the mathematical literature.[10] It may be that the minimal-distance tour problem was stimulated by the so-called Hamiltonian game[1] which is concerned with finding the number of different tours possible over a specified network. The latter problem is cited by some as the origin of group theory and has some connections with the famous Four-Color Conjecture.[9] Merrill Flood (Columbia University) should be credited with stimulating interest in the traveling-salesman problem in many quarters. As early as 1937, he tried to obtain near optimal solutions in reference to routing of school buses. Both Flood and A. W. Tucker (Princeton University) recall that they heard about the problem first in a seminar talk by Hassler Whitney at Princeton in 1934 (although Whitney, recently queried, does not seem to recall the problem). The relations between the traveling-salesman problem and the transportation problem of linear programming appear to have been first explored by M. Flood, J. Robinson, T. C. Koopmans, M. Beckmann, and later by I. Heller and H. Kuhn.[4,5,6]