

Mr. BLATNIK. Mr. Linko, would you stop right here again?

May I ask, Mr. Prisk, as I understand, the guardrails or barricades of this type are to minimize or reduce the degree of damage or degree of injury; in short, to protect the motorists—is that correct—from going over the embankment or striking some fixed object on the other side of the guardrail?

Mr. PRISK. That is correct.

Mr. BLATNIK. In this case the guardrail becomes a hazard itself in attempting to protect the sign. Inadvertently, I am sure not intentionally, little thought was given to what it might do to the driver of the vehicle. Is that correct?

Mr. PRISK. I think that is a reasonably correct statement, Mr. Blatnik. I would think it would be best to realize at the outset that any guardrail installation—and I repeat, any guardrail installation—can be a hazard of itself. It may serve enough good purposes so as to overbalance the disadvantage of having it installed. But the guardrail installations have sometimes been put in without significant thought as to the disadvantages. This is one.

Mr. LINKO. Well, this is one of the reasons I started my program, to remove unnecessary highway hazards. Now these are saturated on the highways. This happens to be the Long Island Expressway, which handles maybe 100,000 cars a day. All you have to do is make a little mistake, have a flat tire, or have somebody push you into this. That road has a usable shoulder. You can get into a serious accident for no good reason. The guardrail serves no purpose at all. And nobody wants to remove these hazards. Now, it would be different if it had a purpose, but it does not have a purpose. You can see this sign is the same type of sign as the other sign and has not got the concrete stanchions.

Mr. CLEVELAND. Mr. Chairman, may I ask the witness a question?

Mr. BLATNIK. Mr. Cleveland.

Mr. CLEVELAND. Have you ever given any consideration to another problem, which we have particularly in my part of the country, New Hampshire, as to what this does to snow removal?

Has anybody on the staff or anybody made any inquiries into that phase of it? I would think that if a plow would hit that it would not do the plow any good.

Mr. W. MAY. Very true, Mr. Congressman. These represent a real difficulty to maintenance people when it comes to snow removal. They have a great problem. Do you have something to say on that, Mr. Linko?

Mr. LINKO. Maybe that is how some may have gotten damaged. But this is more of a hazard than before, because now in this country we have millions of small cars. A large car might be able to smash that and just damage the car but now with the small cars on the road, it will wipe out all the passengers if hit in a certain way.

At the angle this rail is installed, it could throw the cars right into the traffic stream and maybe cause a three- or four-car accident. It is really serving no useful purpose at all.

I feel that we need a program to remove at least the unnecessary hazards, the ones that are doing nothing at all, and this is one of them. Now, with some of these there are heavy, 6-inch I-beams holding up the signs, and if you remove the concrete barrier rail, it might pose a problem. Here, this is not the case because the sign supports are light.