

They made this correction. See, they did taper that curb there a little bit with some asphalt as they fastened this thing to the bridge.

Mr. BLATNIK. Will Mr. Cleveland yield for a moment?

Mr. CLEVELAND. Yes.

Mr. BLATNIK. We will come later to more examples of how hazardous this can be. And we will include some of the cases on Washington Memorial Highway, right along the Potomac. It would make it easier for the car to bump over the rail having two lower steps, so the wheels bounce to the first one, then bounce to the second one. It makes it a lot easier for a car to crash over the railing. We will have pictures of that, showing scenes of accidents that can happen just like that.

Mr. CLEVELAND. We will address ourselves then to the question of these curbs.

Mr. BLATNIK. Yes.

Mr. CLEVELAND. We have had ample pictures of where curbs have been dangerous.

Mr. BLATNIK. Right.

Mr. CLEVELAND. On the other hand, I suppose curbs do perform some functions.

Mr. BLATNIK. If they are high enough, we sort of skid along the highway. However, curbs help you bounce up, elevate you to bounce up one step or two steps, and give you a good crack at the railing. You can be sure to go over. Recoil action.

Mr. LINKO. Those curbs are hazardous and some of them are not 6 inches high; some are 6 and 12 inches high, and you do not even need to leave the roadway.

The guardrail guides you into those high curbs and you can blow out your tire. If you have your brakes on at that particular time, you can collapse your whole front end.

It is a serious matter. I asked the highway department to go back to all these points and do something similar to this; pour that asphalt there and give it long taper, maybe 2 or 3 feet, so you can ride up on that instead of blowing out your tire and running out of control.

Even this particular installation here is not recommended in the book that I read. They put out a special book on how to install a W-beam guardrail. They do not recommend this installation.

Mr. CLEVELAND. Mr. Chairman, while we are on that subject, taking the specific picture we have (fig. 1-91) and the specific bridge, I would like to ask you and Mr. Prisk—forgetting now about the part of the curb facing oncoming traffic, let's talk about the part of the curb parallel with it; is that curb performing a useful function? Mr. Prisk, would you comment on that? What is the purpose of that being raised, let's assume 6 inches, 5 or 6 inches?

Mr. PRISK. Sir; this wide curb has been known as a safety walk that is on the structure. It appears on some of our freeway-type facilities, even though pedestrians are prohibited from the freeways. So the only safety walk purpose you can possibly ascribe to this is for persons who maintain the structure, being able to walk and stay out of the traffic lanes.

The curb here is definitely exposed to traffic and is an added accident factor in a good many cases on bridge structures. New designs have done away with this type of walk. They are gradually being adopted.