

When I was out at this scene, the farmer was working in his field to the right, and he was strongly berating me because of the tree. Finally I quieted him down enough to identify myself and he apologized. He thought I was from the road commission. He told me that on two separate occasions he had called the road commission to indicate people had struck this tree, ripped out a headlight or ripped off a fender, and he had pleaded with them to remove the tree.

This tree was not removed, and we have a fatal crash against it because it is 2 feet into the roadway.

Mr. W. MAY. Is that the farmer's tree?

Dr. HUELKE. No, sir. His farmhouse is nowhere near this area, so it is not a beautification tree for the esthetics of the farm area.

Mr. W. MAY. That tree is on the right-of-way of the road?

Dr. HUELKE. Yes. I then called the highway commission in our county and asked why these trees were not removed and others like them, trees on the outside of the curb that have been hit time and time again; and their answer was, "We don't have the funds to do so."

I think this is very significant, because without the funds, you cannot get the manpower nor the machinery to remove these types of trees that are struck time and time again.

About a year later, I passed this scene and the tree was marked "For Removal." So I called up the county commissioner and said, "Congratulations. I see you have funds to remove these types of trees now." He said, "Oh, no, we don't have funds; but we must do it. Those trees have Dutch elm disease."

Mr. CRAMER. He said what?

Dr. HUELKE. "That tree had Dutch elm disease." Therefore, it is being removed to stop the spread of Dutch elm disease; but they could not afford the money or time or manpower to remove these trees because they were lethal.

Mr. W. MAY. Excuse me, Doctor. Mr. Prisk, do I understand Michigan has entered into a program of tree removal alongside the highways?

Mr. PRISK. Yes. Michigan State Highway Department has started on their trunkline system in a systematic fashion to remove trees that are close to the road and constitute a hazard. Several hundred thousand trees have been removed under this program.

Dr. HUELKE. And according to Mr. McCarthy, the chief designer of Michigan's highway systems, he is very thankful for Dutch elm disease, because now they have a good excuse to start taking them down, because before people would complain that that tree was being taken down; it is a nice old tree, gives a lot of shade, lot of character to the road, and this beautification idea tends to take priority.

Now when they say it has Dutch elm disease, people are more understanding.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question?

Mr. BLATNIK. Mr. Cramer.

Mr. CRAMER. Does the staff know whether this is a Federal-aid highway or not? It does not look very much like it.

Dr. HUELKE. No, it is not; but this is the problem we see and I would like, if I may, to develop this point.

Mr. CRAMER. In just a moment.

Dr. HUELKE. Yes.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Prisk, does the State of Michigan have a program to plant trees for beautification purposes as well as to take them down?

Mr. PRISK. I feel sure that they do.