

that would take you into this heavy mud embankment, and note that the short segment of guardrail is not adequate for protection against that type of bridge pier.

Mr. W. MAY. Mr. Prisk, is that a proper installation of the guard-rail?

Mr. PRISK. Mr. May, I think that would be pretty hard to defend on the basis of the experience that has been had with short sections of guardrail and the fact that the end is exposed—that very definitely could easily be folded back into the bank and anchored so as to give a smooth transition.

Mr. McDONALD. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. KLUCZYNSKI. Yes, Mr. McDonald.

Mr. McDONALD. Mr. Prisk, who would determine whether or not that was a proper guardrail installation?

Mr. PRISK. That is one of the tasks that falls on our division engineer organization in the Bureau of Public Roads, to review State highway plans for construction. A review of details of this sort is sometimes sacrificed because of the volume of work going through.

I think also that there has been some lack of appreciation of the importance safetywise of appurtenances to the highway that do not cost very much money, but which do have an important operational effect.

Mr. McDONALD. Mr. Prisk, in the Bureau of Public Roads, is there any such division as a safety division that would just look at these plans when they are submitted to determine whether or not we are building hazards into the highway system?

Mr. PRISK. Not specifically for that purpose. Our engineering review is for a great many other factors in addition to safety, and there is no exclusive concern for safety in our review of highway plans.

Mr. McDONALD. Mr. Prisk, do you think that there should be a particular division or group that would look at these plans with having only the safety thought in mind in order to coordinate the work of the engineers, who are more interested, really, in seeing traffic move and perhaps have not given enough thought to the safety of the vehicle and the driver on the highway?

Mr. PRISK. I think that is a very good suggestion. The whole matter of an operational review of the plans, I am afraid, is not performed as well as it could be under the present circumstances.

A great deal of the attention is given to the structure of the highway and the construction process itself probably receives first attention.

Mr. McDONALD. Mr. Prisk, do you think it would be in line, perhaps, to require that each State, in the preparation of their plans for the highways, have a safety department or safety engineer to look over the plans; and then at the Federal level, the Bureau of Public Roads, to have a safety division to look over the plans for these new highways in order to determine whether or not the engineers have done a suitable job in construction of the highway as related to safety matters?

Mr. PRISK. I think this function that you are describing must be strengthened.