

I would like to ask Mr. Prisk if he would begin by giving us his remarks relating to this subject.

Mr. BLATNIK. Mr. Prisk.

Mr. PRISK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Constandy.

Members of the committee, I think it goes without saying that the Interstate System provides high quality service for the motoring public of the United States.

The projects that we will be looking at today and conducting a review of, are representative projects in nine States. These are the most recently completed projects open to traffic in the nine States that are available for review. They are representative of urban and rural conditions, and I think they cover the gamut from high-volume traffic, high-speed traffic conditions, on the Interstate, to the lightly traveled sections of the Interstate.

The visits that Mr. Constandy and I were privileged to make were conducted largely during the month of April and early May. So this information that we bring to you today, which will be largely pictorial, is of very recent conditions.

I think that we should start in our consideration of conditions on the Interstate System with this handout sheet that was circulated to you a few minutes ago. The top sheet shows the interstate accident experience, compiled by the Bureau of Public Roads. It shows 65 percent of the accidents and 61 percent of the deaths are associated with one vehicle, 88 percent of the single-vehicle accidents, and 89 percent of the deaths involve the vehicle that leaves the road. This may be a single car or a multicar collision course. This then is the condition to which we are principally directing our attention today, and in our review of the nine interstate projects, which have been presented to you, identified by the sheet that has been circulated to you earlier; 10 categories of information which were thought to be significant from an engineering standpoint.

Analysis has, therefore, been organized in these 10 general categories and I would simply like to mention them here so you have an idea of the way the ground may be covered.

First is the subject of guardrail and median barriers. We often compare our Interstate System to the railroads, I think, remembering, of course, that the railroads have track and fixed path to follow. And I think in a sense that the guardrail, median barrier problem, is perhaps associated with this matter of keeping drivers on course.

Bridges are another category. Shoulders, curbs, drainage facilities, signs and sign supports, lighting, lighting standards, design posts or gores, and slopes at the sides of the embankment at the roadside.

These then are the 10 categories in which the review information has been organized.

The guardrail item has been chosen for initial discussion today because we find that as cars leave the road, this is the most frequently struck item. In fact, in the accidents involving fatalities where vehicles leave the road, the guardrail is struck in one-third of these cases. It is the most frequently struck. So we then have selected guardrail for this median barrier for this first presentation.

Now I show you by this chart something that we see of the design demands as far as guardrail and median barrier are concerned.