

unheeded, despite the good sense they made from a safety point of view. Many of the suggestions were disregarded by the design people who seem to justify continued error by observing that "we have always done it this way."

Chairman Blatnik is sorry he cannot be here to bring today's session of the hearings to a close. As you know, one of the biggest problems confronting Members of Congress is time. We often do not have enough time to do everything that we want to do, due to conflicting demands and duties. However, I do have his statement and I would like to read it here into the record:

As we bring to a close this discussion by a panel of witnesses, each of whom is distinguished and nationally known in his field, the Chair wishes to thank each of the panel members for the fine service he has rendered to his country, the highway program, and the cause of greater safety to be designed and built into our new roads. You are to be commended for giving of your time and your knowledge as you have done, and I want the record to show that the Chair expresses, in behalf of our entire subcommittee, the gratitude and appreciation that is your due.

During the opening days of our public hearings we heard testimony from early witnesses, documented by scores of photographic slides, that all was not well in the design-safety area of our highways. Roadside and gore areas cluttered with sturdy, overdesigned or unnecessary fixed objects such as heavy-duty steel poles or sign supports, elevated concrete bases and similar roadside hardware unprotected or too close to the traveled way were shown to be commonplace, even on our newer roads. So were other unsafe design features which so abound in the record by now that it would serve no purpose to recite them in full at this point.

To establish whether these conditions were limited geographically, we broadened the scope of our inquiry. This was done by taking a representative sampling of the whole Interstate System, utilizing for the purpose an inspection of the most recently opened Interstate project in each of the nine regions administered by the Bureau of Public Roads. Each region was visited, and the projects inspected by a representative of our staff accompanied by an eminent respected and experienced highway engineer, Mr. Charles W. Prisk, who is currently on loan to us from the Bureau of Public Roads. Mr. Prisk's excellent credentials are well known throughout highway circles and require no further comment.

The results of this sampling are now apparent to us all. They are consistent with the testimony that has been previously incorporated into the record at these public hearings. The evidence has unfolded before our eyes as photograph after photograph has been thrown onto the screen to document with overwhelming persuasion the testimony of the witnesses as to what they found and observed on newly opened Interstate projects all around the country.

As a result, for several days this distinguished panel has seen slide after slide upon our screen, depicting built-in roadside hazards in these newest of projects. The opinions and observations of our panel members have confirmed our own impressions from the evidence to date. There is little question but that the design of these, our newest and most modern highways, has failed to take advantage of the available results of experience and research.

The knowledge is at hand. Safe highway design is advocated and taught by leaders in the highway design and traffic engineering fields such as the gentlemen who have constituted our fine panel at this hearing. It is set forth in bulletins and publications that have issued over a period of years from the Bureau of Public Roads and from AASHO, the American Association of State Highway Officials. But somewhere along the line there has been a failure of communication with those who design and construct the actual roads.

Possibly this situation has come about, in part, by a tendency on the part of State highway departments to regard themselves as "constructing agencies," whose chief function is to press forward as rapidly as possible under our great highway building programs. This attitude too frequently displaces what should be the concept of a highway department, namely that of managing the highway system as an operating physical plant, which is what it actually is. The highway is a live "going concern," which grows and changes with conditions, not a mere stretch of pavement which, once completed and opened to traffic, may then be abandoned except for the necessary maintenance-crew attention.