

Dr. BENSON. Well, unfortunately, standard designs have a tendency to be very difficult to change, and once you get one adopted, it may have faults in it but people will continue to use it over and over again because this is an adopted standard. I do not know what the answer is. I think that some way or other we need to impress on people more of the idea that maybe a little more change is for the good.

Another problem I think we have is that quite commonly no one really looks at the entire design when it is finished. No one really sits down with these plans, with all of the installations that are going into the highway indicated on these plans, and takes a look at the complete picture. The signing is on one set of plans, the roadway is on another set of plans, the structures are on another set of plans.

Somebody needs to take a look at this whole ball of wax from the standpoint that we built into the design conditions which are a hazard to the driver of the vehicle, and I frankly do not think that we take a look at it very often from this point of view, and in some way or other we need to have people whose sole job it may be to look at the plan from this standpoint: "Have we done things in this design which will be hazardous that we can avoid?"

I go back to what I said in the beginning, I do not think we should put anything in the highway right-of-way that we do not need there. I think everything we put into the highway right-of-way we must look at from the point of view of can this be made not a hazard to the driver of the vehicle, on the roadway or off the roadway.

Mr. BLATNIK. One of the most pertinent points made today is that apparently no one takes a look at the whole three-dimensional picture when it is completed in all its aspects and all of its functions. It seems to me that the whole thing is quite rigidly compartmentalized and some compartments do an excellent job, such as the repair and installation of lighting fixtures that were knocked down.

I am thinking of the story told about a certain gore area where a sign was established—this is a true story—and an evolution took place over about a 3-year period. To see the actual picture, you have a sign on two wooden sticks as temporary, improvised. Six months later the maintenance crew says in effect—I am making this up—"Holy smoke! This sign has been knocked down 14 times in the last 6 months. We have to do something about it."

From that point on, the direction which the train of thinking takes—this is what intrigues me—the immediate thought should have been, "There is something wrong here. There is a frequency of impact. We would like to know why. Let us do something about it." But instead the train of thought goes in the other direction. "We have to do something about this sign. Instead of wooden posts, we will have new steel posts put in." Now, the sign is still being hit with the same frequency, perhaps increasing now, with more traffic coming along. "Holy smoke! It has been knocked down 18 times the last 6 months." Meanwhile there is a little more damage to the impacting vehicles. Nobody thinks about that.

You have steel pipes and that is not strong enough. So now let us get two heavy-duty steel I-beams, mounted on a concrete support which rises 2 feet above the ground. "Now let them try to knock