

who I am sure is well known to all members of the committee because of his long association with the Federal-aid highway program and working with the committee; and to my right Dr. William Haddon, the Director of the National Highway Safety Bureau, and as you are aware, he heads the Bureau which has responsibility for both the Highway Safety Act of 1966—which was an excellent product of the work of the House Public Works Committee—and also the Motor Vehicle Traffic Safety Act of 1966 which the Congress enacted and the committee work was handled by one of the other committees of the House.

I will proceed with my statement at this time, if I may. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McCARTHY. Please do, Mr. Bridwell.

Mr. BRIDWELL. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am pleased to have this opportunity to appear before you. I have been following the development of these hearings with great interest, not only because of my own concern, but more importantly because of the valuable contribution that the hearings are making to public understanding of the magnitude of the problems you have been studying.

There can be little disagreement that the single most important lesson to be learned from the evidence presented so far is the importance of thorough and detailed attention to the safety aspects of highway design, construction, and maintenance.

The hearings and the information produced have made a valuable contribution in the area of highway safety, and the highway program is indebted for your efforts.

It is appropriate that these hearings are being held at this point in time, when national needs in highway safety are being subjected to concerted action. During the course of these hearings, the initial set of standards for State and local highway safety programs was issued by Secretary Boyd. And, shortly before, the report of the Special Traffic Safety Committee of the American Association of State Highway Officials was published, and its findings adopted by the Bureau of Public Roads in all Federal-aid highway construction programs. These actions were preceded by the promulgation of the initial motor vehicle safety standards.

Taken together, these and other current governmental efforts represent a comprehensive offensive in the area of highway safety—an area which encompasses the highway, the vehicle and the driver, and the environment in one context, and in another the elements contributing to the preaccident, accident, and postaccident problems.

In every facet of highway safety, we have set as our goal the rapid and effective improvement of all factors which can contribute to the reduction of deaths, injuries, and damage.

No one will dispute the fact that the present toll of traffic deaths, injuries, and property losses on our highways presents a grim picture. I do not feel that it should be our role here today, any more than it has been the role of this committee throughout these entire hearings, to downgrade the accomplishments and advances already made in our highway systems. Certainly our Interstate System attests to these advances. On the other hand, so long as we are killing ourselves on our highways at the rate of roughly 1,000 people per week, we can only