

from bicycles, motorcycles, and similar nonauto vehicle types. The figure is actually about 3 percent of the 53,000 fatalities of last year. The question is immediately posed then as to which one of these accident groups to focus special attention on, if a choice must be made among them. The obvious manner is to treat all three at the same time, but the practical and real limits of money and other factors in the past prevented such a desirable choice.

Your chairman quite properly wants to be assured mistakes of the past are not carried over into our new roads, particularly the Interstate System. A related question is whether the design of highways is being done in such a manner as to make use of the fruits of research and experience.

The answer to both of these questions is an unqualified "yes" and I offer my previous remarks in support of this.

I emphasize that highway safety has been a principal objective of the Bureau of Public Roads since the first Federal-aid road legislation of 1916. It is in fact a specifically stated requirement governing our approval of Federal-aid projects and is contained in the basic act of 1921 and continued in every amendment to the act since that date.

Substantial research in design and operation has been conducted or sponsored and implemented by the Bureau of Public Roads and the State highway departments.

While highway safety has been of primary concern over the years, the practical limitation of available funds at both State and Federal levels has historically restricted the extent to which all of the objectives of highway engineers and administrators could be achieved, over and above the mere movement of people and goods.

Even where the additional achievements were possible, it has generally happened in the past that advanced design features intended to enhance safety or esthetics or both, have been frequently assailed as "frills" by some public officials as well as by private individuals and groups who demanded more miles of road improvement as the principal product of the highway departments.

This, then, Mr. Chairman, is a partial report on Bureau activities in the field of your inquiry. Briefly summarized, the Bureau's principal activities in this area are concerned with these main, closely related efforts:

- (1) A modified and expanded program for identifying and correcting high accident locations, or potentially high-accident locations;
- (2) a concerted effort to provide a uniformly safe environment along our roadsides to substantially reduce hazards to vehicles leaving the road out of control;
- (3) a continuing program of research and experimentation in highway and traffic engineering in its broadest sense.

All things considered, the Bureau and the State highway departments have done a conscientious, constructive job over the years in enhancing highway safety, as is evidenced by a substantial decline in the fatality rate while the exposure and the probability of accidents has increased sharply due to increased travel. We are always willing and eager to learn how to do a better job, and we welcome any additional knowledge and sound suggestions which these hearings or any other source might develop.