

The establishment of the Federal Highway Administration in the new Department of Transportation is hoped to be of great help over the long haul in bringing even more expertise to bear on the total problem by assigning specific areas of responsibility to its component agencies. In this reorganization process the Driver Register Service, which has functioned in the Bureau of Public Roads since 1961, has been transferred to the National Highway Safety Bureau. We are proud of its accomplishments under our own direct jurisdiction, and expect that it will be a tool of increasing value in the attack on the highway accident problem.

The subcommittee's own studies, as well as the testimony given during these hearings, will clearly indicate that more money than is presently available or in sight will be required in the effort to make a marked reduction in the role of the roadway and roadside in the highway accident, injury, and death toll rate. While this may not be the proper place to make the point, I believe that it should be strongly made because it is a key consideration in the problem you are attacking and we might as well recognize the fact. The highway engineer is frequently accused of shortsightedness but, as one of them, I honestly think that the problem over the years has been due more to funding deficiencies than to defective vision, lack of knowledge of the problem, or a lack of concern. We have had to make choices on how to spend the funds at our disposal and while safety has always been the paramount consideration, we have had to knowingly forgo some safety items which appeared of least hazard in order to put primary funding emphasis on those believed to represent the larger safety benefits.

That concludes my statement, Mr. McCarthy.

Mr. McCARTHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Turner.

I just have one question. According to your statement at the bottom of page 11, which I would certainly like to endorse, and I think it is an excellent statement overall, it says, "it is useless to talk seriously about reducing fatalities until we are also willing as a society to take serious steps to eliminate the socially accepted mixture of alcohol and driving because the majority of the annual victims result from this cause rather than any deficiency in highway design or construction."

Now you say a majority, which is over 50 percent, based on your own research.

Mr. TURNER. This is based on the research of many groups. And some studies would indicate that the factor may be as high as 75 percent, but it is clearly shown in all of the research in this area that something more than 50 percent, probably considerably more than 50 percent, involve in one form or another alcohol as a contributor to the accident.

Mr. McCARTHY. We have those figures, too. The gentleman from the State of Florida and I were especially interested in this, and as you know this is a result of the study going on.

Now one other point occurred to me. I would like to get your opinion about the current flurry of activity regarding insurance. Now I have sort of a feeling that two congressional committees might even work at cross purposes. There has been a great deal of material appearing in print of late about what is alleged to be precipitous and arbitrary cancellation of insurance.