

We welcome this opportunity to present the National Safety Council's views relative to those sections of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 that pertain to traffic safety.

My associates here this morning are Mr. W. G. Johnson, the National Safety Council's general manager, and our general counsel, Mr. Harry Rosenfield.

Two years and one month ago yesterday we were privileged to testify before the House Committee on Public Works in behalf of traffic safety and our statement began with these still relevant facts:

The President has quite properly said that traffic accidents are the second most serious problem facing the Nation, second only to the war in Vietnam. U.S. motor vehicle accidents in 1965 killed 49,000 men, women, and children. Injuries disabled 1,800,000 and an equal number suffered nondisabling injuries. Economic costs that can be tabulated aggregated \$8,500,000,000.

Later on in the same testimony we talked about what we believed would have to be invested, and by whom, if anything truly effective was to be done about it. We said:

The Federal Government should assume its proper responsibility, with all levels of government and the private sector, in meeting with the additional \$1 billion needed annually. . . .

We are now convinced that this estimate was on the low side, perhaps by a multiple of 2, 2½, or 3.

While a noteworthy and commendable effort has been made since the Highway Safety Act was signed into law in September of 1966, the tragic truth is that we still have a long, long way to go before it can be said that we are doing really anything that matches the size of the problem.

What has happened on our highways just in the last 5 years?

Nearly a quarter of a million—250,000—men, women and children have been killed. Approximately 9 million persons have been disabled and many of them will never again be fully productive citizens. The economic waste has exceeded \$45 billion. Now, about the next 5 years?

Remember, the last 5 years saw an increase of 12 percent in licensed drivers. Motor vehicle numbers increased 25 percent. Travel increased by 200 billion miles in the 5 years.

The next 5 years undoubtedly means more of the same and the consequences promise to be even more wasteful of invaluable resources. In 1966 congressional leaders very properly told the national community that no one had done enough for traffic safety. The National Safety Council agreed. Is anyone doing enough for traffic safety now?

Certainly more is being done now than ever before, but it still isn't nearly enough. One needs only to look at our traffic accident losses for the first quarter of 1968 to realize what we face in the months ahead.

Traffic fatalities for the first 4 months of 1968 totaled 15,610—a 5-percent increase over the 14,810 men, women, and children who were killed during the first 4 months of last year. Travel continues to rise. In March alone this year, 4,130 lives were lost. This was a 5-percent increase over last year's March loss of 3,930.

Who is having these accidents and what are the economic and social overtones? Motor vehicle crashes take their toll among all persons, regardless of economic circumstances. The overall motor vehicle death rates, on a population basis, are about the same for white and nonwhite persons, but for children under 10 years of age, the nonwhite rates are about one-third higher than the white rates.