

you change the bridges? You would have to reconstruct all the bridges, would you not?

Mr. KEE. Yes, sir; but that is a question—if my understanding is correct, Mr. Chairman, that would have to be taken into consideration and recommended by the appropriate State highway commissioners, you know, to come in under the regular program to improve.

I have a bridge down in my district that has been closed and I have everybody in the community upset and mad. Every two or three days, they write, "Why don't you open the bridge?" I just write back: The State road commissioner—this happens to be a small town called Hinton, W. Va., and the small business people are just screaming to high heaven, but the fact is that bridge is an unsafe bridge. That will have to be replaced. And until such time as the State sees its way clear—that bridge is well over 40 years old I might add, it is a very narrow bridge—at such time as the State can come up with their share and include it in the system—the State will certainly in my judgment recommend a new bridge. So we just have to take those on a case-by-case basis, or individual basis.

Mr. McCARTHY. According to your figures here, I figured out that about 68 percent of the bridges on the Federal-aid primary and secondary system are designed for weights of less than 1,832, which is the present limit.

Are you intimating that we should rebuild all these bridges? It would be a tremendous job.

Mr. KEE. Well, I will try to answer my distinguished colleague from New York's question: We have to proceed with the building of the highways and, of course, that includes the bridges and major improvements under the Federal-aid highway system.

Now, if we do not have enough bridges 2 years from now, certainly the time will come that we can—but I certainly would not want to be a party to having one of the larger, heavier trucks pass over a bridge and have the same tragedy which we saw in this Point Pleasant Bridge disaster.

So right now I strongly urge that we retain the provisions of the 1956 act—which, incidentally, contained a "grandfather" clause, higher weight limit at that time, until such time as our highways are constructed, and that includes bridges, for the safety factor, sir.

Does that answer your question?

Mr. McCARTHY. Thank you very much, Jim.

I might compliment you for your forthrightness and courage in taking this position. I think it has been very illuminating and very helpful to us. I did not expect this. It is quite an eye opener.

Thank you very much.

Mr. KEE. Thank you.

Mr. HOWARD. Thank you, Mr. McCarthy.

Are there any questions on my left?

Mr. SCHWENGEL. Yes, I have a question.

Mr. HOWARD. Mr. Schwengel.

Mr. SCHWENGEL. First I would like to join my colleagues in commending the gentleman, who is a distinguished member of this committee, for his fine, forthright, and enlightening statement.

Mr. KEE. Thank you, Mr. Schwengel.