

sent serious safety hazards to all highway users for the benefit of only 250,000 heavy trucks at this time which would be able to take advantage of the heavier weights and increased size permitted.

If enacted such legislation would bring about substantial increases in cost to the construction of highway and bridges and accelerated depreciation in the expected life of such facilities accompanied by substantial increases in maintenance costs.

The AAA believes that truck combinations are already too large. The passenger car operator and our members in particular intuitively fear sharing the same highway with such huge trucks. The motorists intuitive fear of the heavy truck is well founded. Whenever a truck and car collide it is the occupant of the car who is most likely to suffer injury or death and not the truck driver.

A study by the Bureau of Motor Carriers Safety in 1967 showed that almost half of the fatal and injury-producing accidents involving common carriers resulted from collisions with an automobile.

For every truck driver who died in such accidents, 38 others died.

Mr. Bridwell, the highway administrator recently told the truck council that heavy vehicles comprising 7 percent of the registered motor vehicles account for 11 percent of the total vehicle miles traveled and were involved in 19 percent of the highway fatalities.

Now, let us take a look at vehicle width which you heard testimony on today and yesterday. Legislation before the committee would increase permissible width on the Interstate System from 96 inches to 102 inches plus additional width necessary for tire bulge due to loads and safety devices.

Do not forget traffic neither begins nor ends on the interstate. Other routes must be used as connectors. Sixty percent of the rural road mileage on State primary systems in 1966 had traffic lanes less than 12 feet wide. A 12-foot lane is the minimum width needed to accommodate a vehicle 102 inches wide.

Using figures of the Industry Advisory Committee composed of the American Trucking Associates, Inc., and suppliers, the 102-inch width could mean an overall width across the tires of 106 inches and some testimony says 108.

This does not include tire chains or flexible fenders. When such items are added we are really talking about an overall width of 108 inches, 9 feet, and not 8 feet. It is a full 12 inches above the present statutory limit. This creates a tremendous safety hazard. Percentage-wise apply it and you are talking about not just a small increase but a 12.5-percent increase.

VEHICLE WEIGHTS

Increases in axle weights have had direct and inevitable effect on the life of pavements and the safety of bridge structures. If the weight of trucks and combinations are further increased, existing roads and streets will deteriorate at an accelerated rate.

The cost to replace bridges and roads thus prematurely destroyed will become an increasingly heavy tax burden on the operators of 80 million passenger cars and the 15 million light truck owners whose needs do not require these heavy facilities but who bear the major share of the cost of providing and maintaining them.