

STATUS REPORT**FEDERAL ROLE
IN
TRAFFIC SAFETY****INSURANCE INSTITUTE for HIGHWAY SAFETY**Watergate Office Building
2600 Virginia Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20037

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No. 74

February 27, 1969

DR. HADDON NAMED PRESIDENT OF IIHS

Dr. William Haddon, Jr., who recently resigned as Director of the National Highway Safety Bureau, has been appointed President of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Dr. Haddon will assume his new duties March 12.

In announcing the appointment on February 24, Donald L. Schaffer, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the IIHS, said the action marked a new phase in the activities of the IIHS as an independent, non-governmental force working for highway safety.

"The Institute is extremely fortunate in finding a scientist and administrator of Dr. Haddon's qualifications and personal dedication," Mr. Schaffer said. "The automobile insurance industry has a direct and overriding interest in saving lives and preventing or minimizing injuries. This coincides closely with the public interest in this area. It also coincides with the programs and aims of Dr. Haddon in his long and distinguished career of public service."

Dr. Haddon received his B.S. degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1949 and medical and Master of Public Health degrees from Harvard in 1953 and 1957, respectively.

Over a 10-year period he held various positions with the New York Department of Public Health, during which time he earned a reputation as a thorough researcher and advocate of analytical methods in dealing with the highway crash problem. He established special credentials in the relationship of alcohol to accidents and in minimizing the extent to which the vehicle itself contributes to injuries and deaths.

President Johnson named Dr. Haddon to be the first head of the NHTSA when it was created in the fall of 1966. Over a 29-month period his Bureau, although handicapped by rigid fiscal and personnel controls, issued the first national standards for new motor vehicles and for state highway safety programs and began an extensive research program.

His tenure represented the beginning of an era in which such phrases as "vehicle defect," "recall campaign," and "federal safety requirement" became established in the lexicon of the public and the mass communications media.

As this was written, Dr. Haddon's successor had not been named. Dr. Robert Brenner, Deputy Director, was serving as Acting Director of the Bureau.

The IIHS is a Washington-based, non-profit safety organization that is supported by three trade associations representing more than 500 companies that write most of the nation's automobile insurance. It was established in 1959.

The first President of the IIHS, Russell I. Brown, resigned in October 1967. Since that time the organization has been headed on an acting basis by Nils A. Lofgren, who continues as Vice President.

VEHICLE RECALLS PASS 10-MILLION MARK

General Motors Corp. on February 26 announced it was recalling 4.9 million automobiles and trucks for possible repair of safety-related defects. The massive recall, by far the largest to date, raised past the 10-million mark the total number of vehicles recalled since the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act went into effect in September, 1966.

Figures compiled by the National Highway Safety Bureau as of January 31, 1969, which did not include the last General Motors recall, showed there were 278 recall campaigns involving 5,416,877 domestically-produced vehicles, and 69 campaigns involving 839,664 foreign-produced vehicles.

The Traffic Safety Act requires manufacturers to notify dealers, first purchasers, and owners to whom any warranties may have been transferred about any suspected safety-related defect in vehicles or equipment. The practice of "recalling" vehicles has evolved, so that any needed corrections or repairs can be made, but it is not mandatory on the part of owners to comply.

The General Motors announcement includes 2.4 million 1965 to 1968 Chevrolet cars in which it is possible for carbon monoxide under certain conditions to "leak" into the passenger compartment. The defect has been associated with at least four deaths.

Also involved are 2.5 million 1968 and 1969 assorted Chevrolets, Pontiacs, Buicks, Oldsmobiles, and Cadillacs suspected of having faulty carburetors that could lead to throttle jamming, thus making it hard to stop.

It will take General Motors several months to complete the recall task.

FHWA ASKS PRESS HELP IN TIRE RECALL

The Federal Highway Administration, following a prod from an influential senator, on February 21 urged the nation's press to help disseminate information about tire recalls.

The FHWA called attention to two current recall campaigns. They involve the Mohawk Rubber Co., which on January 18 initiated the recall of 10,000 AIRFLO passenger car tires size 7.35-14, purchased since February 1, 1968, and the General Tire and Rubber Co., which on February 4 initiated the recall of all of its Safety Jet tires size 9.00-15. The latter recall reportedly applies to 40,207 tires.

The FHWA said samples of both the tire series involved had failed to pass minimum tests for safety established under the Traffic Safety Act of 1966. The FHWA noted in a release that tire recalls are more difficult to carry out than motor vehicle recalls because tire dealers generally do not keep records of tire buyers.

The FHWA action followed a request by Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.) to Secretary of Transportation John Volpe to rectify what he called "a serious deficiency in the DOT's policy on the disclosure of information vital to the public safety." He accused the DOT of being a passive observer while the tire manufacturers involved deliberately timed the issuance of recall news releases so the information would be used by a minimum of the press, radio, and television.

NIXON PICKS TURNER FOR FHWA SPOT

President Nixon has nominated Francis C. Turner, Director of the Bureau of Public Roads and associated with the Bureau since 1929, to be the new Federal Highway Administrator.

Mr. Turner joined the Bureau as a junior highway engineer and served in various subsequent capacities, including detached service to the War Department in 1944-46 for construction of the Alaska highway, and to the Foreign Service in 1949-50 to coordinate the Philippine Rehabilitation Program.

In December 1963, he was named Chief Engineer and later became acting Federal Highway Administrator when the BPR was still a part of the Department of Commerce. When the BPR was transferred into the new Department of Transportation Mr. Turner was nominated to become Director and was confirmed by the Senate in February, 1967.

As the Federal Highway Administration is now structured, its three line components are the Bureau of Public Roads, the National Highway Safety Bureau, and the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety.

There has been some high-level discussion about removing the NHSB from the jurisdiction of the FHWA, but any such action would probably have to be initiated by Capitol Hill.

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EVALUATION GUIDE -- A recent memorandum sent by the Federal Highway Administration to its regional offices and to the various states deals with the need for on-going evaluation of highway safety programs. The thrust of the memo is that each state should be making a maximum effort to "optimize the allocation of limited resources." It is particularly important to evaluate management performance and program performance, the memo says. Criteria to be used are (1) the participation of various state agencies and political subdivisions, (2) the existence of enabling legislation or some substitute, (3) an explicit list of "program deficiencies" as measured against the highway safety standards, (4) a "narrative" describing how the state plans to get things done, and (5) some attempt at quantity-quality and cost-effectiveness analysis to get an idea of where relative pay-offs lie from program to program. "Cost-benefit analysis estimates the benefits resulting from a program or approach in terms of lives saved, injuries reduced, and property damage avoided," the FHWA says. "While it has a limited application in a statewide highway safety program due to the difficulty of isolating the impact of one factor, it is suggested that the governor's representative/program manager use this analysis wherever feasible."

RAILROAD-GRADE CROSSINGS -- The Federal Highway Administration reports 1,800 railroad-grade crossings in the federal-aid highway system have been eliminated by separation or relocation since 1964. Improved protection equipment has been installed at more than 1,500 additional crossings during the same period. But grade level crossings still remain a major hazard, according to the FHWA, with about 225,000 crossings existing in the nation's 3.7 million mile network of streets and highways.

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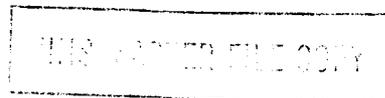
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STATUS REPORT

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