

discussion of the scope and severity of present and future problems confronting air transportation, an analysis of possible solutions, and the tentative conclusions and recommendations of the subcommittee.

Additional hearings will be necessary to explore in greater detail certain areas where statistical and financial data were lacking. The tentative conclusions and recommendations do not represent in any way the firm or fixed view of the subcommittee, because the presentation of additional facts might warrant substantial change. The subcommittee presents this interim report as a working paper for subsequent hearings to be scheduled as early as practicable and to establish the broad guidelines upon which detailed legislation can be developed this year.

HISTORY OF THE FEDERAL AIRPORT ACT

The Federal Airport Act (Public Law 377, 79th Cong., 60 Stat. 170), enacted in 1946, established a program of Federal aid to provide a system of public airports adequate to meet the needs of civil aeronautics. The act authorized grants-in-aid to State and local governments on a matching basis for the construction, development, and improvement of civil airports. The annual authorization and appropriations have varied and to some extent been uncertain. Despite the vast amount of Federal funds granted, the amount has always fallen short of the demand. The amount available in any one year has never exceeded \$75 million.

During the 1950's, Federal assistance was available for both terminal area development and runway construction. Since 1961 the only items eligible for Federal assistance have been those related directly to safety, such as runway and taxiway construction, land acquisition, and the purchase and installation of safety devices such as high intensity in-runway lighting. Passenger terminal facilities are not now eligible items for Federal grants.

Under this grant program, 2,249 public airports have been developed or improved with the expenditure of almost \$1.2 billion in Federal funds. This has been a significant, but still small, part of the total investment made by State, local, and Federal Governments in the national airport system amounting to almost \$6 billion. The money has been used for the construction and development of small airports in thousands of communities across the country serving general aviation users, as well as for the development of more than 500 airports serving the airlines. Over the last 3-year period, 144 reliever airports have been included in the grant program. This is the result of the \$7 million a year set-aside for such airports which was incorporated in the 1961 extension of the Federal Airport Act. These airports have helped to alleviate the congestion at the major hub airports serving airline passengers.

In fiscal year 1968 the Federal Aviation Administration announced its grants-in-aid program to provide \$70.2 million in matching funds for the improvement of 386 airports. To illustrate the magnitude of demand for Federal assistance the Administration received 778 requests for aid totaling \$339.3 million. Based upon the improbable assumption that only half of the requests for 1968 were absolutely vital, the Federal assistance provided amounted to less than half of