

Senator BAKER. Well, I still have some hope.

Mrs. SPELLMAN. You will have to develop your voice just a little bit more. You are doing quite well, but a little more and you will be there.

At the outset today, the National Association of Counties would like once again to express its wholehearted support for the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968. This is the fourth year that NACO has come before you to endorse this important and necessary legislation. It is disappointing that such fundamental correctional legislation, embodying concrete and desirable alterations in the administration of our Federal Government's massive grant-in-aid program, has not already been enacted and implemented. We would like to commend this committee for holding hearings again this year. In an era of intergovernmental relations, creative federalism, if you will, this bill almost cries out for action.

The problems with which this legislation concerns itself are myriad. They involve the effective and efficient operation of our grant-in-aid system. They concern the viability of local-State-Federal relations. Federal aid funds have quadrupled since 1955. And so, unfortunately, have the problems of all levels of government, both with regard to the implementation of programs to meet the crisis of public service to our citizens, and with regard to the procuring and administering of funds to meet the increasing demands. The Intergovernmental Cooperation Act would give impetus to the huge task of coordinating at all levels of government. It would make more effective and equitable the Federal Government's \$17 billion grant-in-aid programs, its use and acquisition of land in urban areas, and its relocation assistance policies.

We are all familiar with the problems which our State and local governments encounter with regard to obtaining the administering Federal grant-in-aid funds. Briefly, they are:

(1) Long delays and continued uncertainty from application to final funding.

(2) Lack of adequate priority ranking systems.

(3) The enormous local machinery and capacity to coordinate the 359 grant programs at the point of impact.

Many counties just cannot tackle this problem adequately.

(4) Lack, in many Federal programs, of a requirement involving the active and continuing participation of local elected officials.

And to me this is a most serious oversight.

(5) Overlap of comprehensive planning requirements for each program, and the lack of coordination of required functional plans.

(6) Confusion at the point of impact as to the duplication of Federal efforts. And I cannot begin to tell you how much confusion really exists. Our one Federal agency does not understand the programs or the problems of the other, and the State and local government are enmeshed in this mass.

Well, that seems to paint a pretty bleak picture, but I am happy to say there is a positive side.

NACO is extremely pleased with the cooperative steps which have been taken by many departments and agencies to deal with the above problems that I have outlined. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has recently published a priority system for its grants