

Mr. CRAMER. You suggest that the funds for this TOPICS program should be made available for projects on ABC as well.

Is it your understanding that such funds would not be available under the present wording of the bill?

Mr. MORTON. I believe that under my interpretation of the bill these funds would not be available for ABC sections of highway.

Mr. CRAMER. Do you agree with that?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Cramer, I believe that under the present language a TOPICS program can be carried on through the regular ABC authorizations under the Federal-aid system, and comes out of the regular ABC. If they are going to have some additional authorizations, another quarter of a billion, we have made some recommendations that the use should be expanded to use on interstate and not on the Topics alone.

One State called us and indicated that their cities could not match this sort of program at the present time.

Mr. CRAMER. If these funds are expended on the TOPICS program, as I understand they can be, on non-Federal-aid highways, do you think that expenditure should come out of the trust fund where they are spending this money in non-Federal-aid highways?

Mr. JOHNSON. We are recommending that at some time there be another Federal-aid system program created in the cities which would be off the Federal-aid system and give them the same deal the counties have in the Federal-aid secondary.

The way this is written here in the bill, it would apply to roads off the Federal-aid system and off the State highway systems, which would require matching on the part of the cities.

The States could not match it. It would be coming out of the Trust Fund.

Mr. CRAMER. The trust fund that otherwise is used for Federal-aid highways?

Mr. JOHNSON. That is right.

Mr. CRAMER. So it appears this trust fund has become quite a grab-bag. They keep dreaming up new programs to come out of the trust fund, even though it means less highways being built.

Mr. JOHNSON. I think any program in history, after so long a time, has had all sorts of appendages and sophistications added to it, even before you took care of the basic requirements of the program.

Mr. CRAMER. On page 4 you discussed advance acquisition of right-of-way and indicated that eight States oppose the legislative proposal before us of \$100 million.

Can you indicate why, in your understanding, those States opposed the setting up of \$100 million for advance acquisition?

Mr. JOHNSON. These eight States were of the opinion this program was not needed, or at least not in their States. We did not say that we approved the language in the bill in that first sentence, but we said that the States generally were in accord with the purpose of this section.

Mr. CRAMER. As you know, I was the author of the 7-year advance acquisition position, but it has not been taken advantage of by too many States, because most of them would rather spend the money on construction. That is understandable, because there is not enough money to do the construction anyway.