

Mr. CRAMER. Now, we wrote into the law—and the intention was so and the right was so, at least as far as I am concerned, the payer was reimbursed, should the sign be required to be removed.

As I understand it, the agreements so far refer to the prospective or future construction of signs; or in the event of the actual wearing away of the signs, and non-replacement.

Is that your understanding?

Mr. SPOONER. Yes. They do affect existing signs, Congressman Cramer, insofar as they are illegal for being in the wrong kind of area. They exempt existing signs insofar as they are legal because of size, lighting and spacing. That is why we are hurt.

Mr. CRAMER. So in effect, this is a method by which at the present time, the Administration is getting around the requirement of reimbursement.

Isn't that the effect of it?

Mr. SPOONER. That is right. They are not going to take down signs that are in violation.

Mr. CRAMER. Now, as I understand it, getting back to Vermont law, as a matter of fact, those signs which the State is putting up are actually within the right-of-way of the highways. Isn't that correct?

Mr. SPOONER. I think so, although I might say that I have seldom read a more complex, vague, and general law, and I have not yet been able to satisfy myself exactly as to what it means.

Mr. CRAMER. That is my understanding.

Mr. SPOONER. I think you are right.

Mr. CRAMER. It appears in that instance we are definitely going in the wrong direction.

Mr. SPOONER. I think so.

Mr. CRAMER. Even permitting signs within the right-of-way, which were not permitted at all in the past.

Mr. SPOONER. And perhaps more of them than we used to have.

Mr. CRAMER. How in the world the Bureau could have approved such a law as that, I don't know.

Mr. SPOONER. I don't know what happens to the agreement—the Federal-State agreement—that was signed prior to the passage of this most recent Vermont law.

Mr. CRAMER. The other thing that bothers me is that if we put this law on the books, a lot of States expect Congress to come through with the funds. It has not; it is not going to, in my opinion. They have not even passed the authorization for this fiscal year.

It is my personal opinion, I doubt if it is going to be done in fiscal 1969 or 1970, at least, and the States, yet, are being pressured to pass legislation which in effect would commit the States to do the job but without any assurance that Federal money would be available.

Mr. SPOONER. That is correct.

Mr. CRAMER. Does that make sense to you? It doesn't to me.

Mr. SPOONER. Not a bit.

Mr. CRAMER. It is in about the same position as safety is. The States passed the laws. We don't put up our matching money that we committed ourselves to, by authorization.

Mr. SPOONER. That is absolutely right.

A few of the States have had the good sense to say, this act shall be in effect in abeyance until the money appropriated is available; but not too many.