

Q. Governor, you said in your opening statement that it is foolhardy for any outside group to block the priority bill. Do you know of any specific group that attempted to do this?

A. Well, I was thinking more of a legislative individual, Mr. Kelly.

Q. Who is that?

A. Well, obviously Congressman Long has a long record of trying to impede the efficient operation of the State Roads Commission. I sincerely wish he would confine himself to Federal legislation, which is really the reason he's in office and he's been obstructing and stimulating discord in these areas for as long as I can remember. Obviously he does run from Baltimore County and I'm sure he thinks it's a very popular position to advocate the northern crossing for that purpose. But his irresponsibility in the way he approaches the question is almost unbelievable. Governor Tawes before me had the same difficulty with him. So this is not a partisan consideration. He said publicly the other day that the Bay Bridge situation was the reason the tax program was being enacted. And you would think that a United States Congressman would have a greater knowledge of fiscal matters in the State. Obviously bridges are built with tolls and not with tax money.

Q. Governor, some members of the General Assembly have said that they regard the question of the bridge location as at least partly a political decision to be made and not entirely an engineering decision because it has a great impact upon the economic development of whatever community it is going directly to link. Have you any observation on that?

A. Yes. I regard it neither as a political decision nor as an engineering decision. Principally I regard it as a financial decision because we all know that toll facilities have to be constructed with a sound financial probability of the return of the toll money to amortize the bonds. And the traffic count, of course that's basically an engineering determination, will have to determine whether the money will be forthcoming to liquidate the indebtedness properly or whether it won't. And regardless of how important it is to open up a new area industrially, you can't build a bridge with bond money supported by tolls if the money is not going to be there to amortize those loans. Now if such a bridge were to be constructed with general fund money and not with tolls, we might arrive at a different conclusion, but that has never been done in our State and as far as I know hasn't been done in many states.