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REMARKS BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF  
TRANSPORTATION, PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE  
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I'm very happy to be here.

I want to share some personal impressions with you, observations on the growing social crisis which has led to the formation of a Department of Transportation.

And I'm pleased that the opportunity has occurred on Franklin Roosevelt's birthday. For he was the President who re-asserted the radical idea that a Government exists to provide for human wants. And he was the leader who gave America, in the midst of a desperate economic emergency, renewed confidence in the creative powers of our political institutions.

Members of the Women's National Democratic Club need no reminder of this heritage. You are the custodians of that tradition.

Looking back now, we can see that the entire middle third of the twentieth century has been preoccupied with Rooseveltian goals. Matters like personal security. Civilizing the market place. Easing hardships. Broadening communication.

We're still not rid of those concerns and probably never will be. But today, it seems to me, this nation is confronted by a totally different kind of domestic emergency which is forcing a new set of priorities upon our Government.

And ironically, this emergency is one that arises to a considerable extent from our general prosperity as well as population growth.

The core of the challenge is change--rampant technological change.

We are living in what has been characterized by scientists as the Exponential Age--a period of accelerating change, accelerating not at a constant rate but at a faster and faster pace.

This technological change (if you examine any particular part of it) is what, in the old days, we used to call progress. The trouble is, there's so much of it now we don't know what to do with it all. It's like a pitcher of water, which we can drink, compared to a lake, which we can drown in.

There's an avalanche of progress threatening to overwhelm and shatter our community life.

Our immediate problem is how to get some degree of intelligent control over change itself. How to begin channeling it in the direction, and for the purposes, favored by society at large.

In the past, our techniques for dealing with change were defensive techniques. For each punch, a counterpunch. For each new problem, a new Federal agency to deal with the problem.

I'm not being critical. The system worked tolerably well in the past. It was a whole lot better than no action at all. But I don't think that method will work at all in the Exponential Age.

We need to anticipate. We have to be prepared for the effects of causes. We must get over our perpetual state of surprise at each permutation.

The present era--this final third of the twentieth century--demands a sustained, deliberate effort to gain mastery over the problems in advance of their becoming problems, or at the very least before they begin dominating our lives.

One phase of a very broad governmental effort aimed in that direction is the new Department of Transportation.

It is, quite literally, a rare privilege to be involved in the setting up of a new Executive Department. This is not an occasion that happens every

second season. In 178 years since ratification of the U. S. Constitution, only fourteen Departments have ever been established, of which only twelve now remain.

Here is an interesting fact: since the birth of our Federal Republic, only two American Presidents have managed to raise more than one of these institutions to Cabinet level.

One was George Washington, the other was Lyndon B. Johnson.

To my mind, the formation, first, of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, then the Department of Transportation, in little over a year's time, represents a unique political achievement. And an enduring testimonial to President Johnson's leadership.

For the truth is, people in both parties have been trying to get a transportation department ever since the year 1874. The matter has been debated, off and on, for over ninety years. But only in this Administration were the obstacles finally overcome.

The new Department represents a decision by Congress "to centralize in one Cabinet-level department the responsibility for leadership in the development, direction and coordination of the principal transportation policies, functions, and operations of the Federal Government."

In a formal sense, what we have is a major reorganization, a grouping together of about thirty existing transportation programs, some so isolated that their administrators had never heard of one another. We're in the process of bringing these people together right now, organizationally if not physically.

Officially, the Department will open its doors on March 1. When it does it will go on the books as the fifth largest enterprise in the Federal establishment, with upwards of 92,000 employees and a total annual budget in the neighborhood of \$6 billion.

However, this magnitude is a little deceptive. The main reason it's so large to start with is the \$4 billion dowry brought into this marriage by the Bureau of Public Roads from the Highway Trust Fund. On the other hand, the figure for personnel is principally made up of 44,000 people in the Federal Aviation Agency and 41,000 who work for the U. S. Coast Guard.

I think I should mention that the regulatory agencies--the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Civil Aeronautics Board, and Federal Maritime Commission--are not included in the Department. It was a wise thing to keep the machinery of economic regulation separate and apart from transportation promotion and policy formulation.

The only other major Federal transportation activity that hasn't been transferred to the Department is the Maritime Administration. I think this was an error. I think it should be part of the Transportation Department. And, eventually, I believe the Maritime people will want it to be.

Until that time, the Department will be operating with a very vital component missing from its organizational chart, but, I assure you, not missing from its policy deliberations. Because all modes of transportation are closely interrelated. Where one ends, another begins.

You cannot conceive of ocean shipping by itself; no cargo would ever arrive at the docks. The ships in harbor are dependent on the railroads, and the trucks, and the pipelines. And on the dock workers, too.

Across the ocean, of course, there are rail, truck and pipeline facilities that are equally dependent on the cargo vessel.

There simply is no way of formulating public policy for land transportation which will not have an effect on water transportation.

For that matter, there is no policy for air transportation which can avoid having an impact on urban highways and mass transit.

To be perfectly obvious about this point, let me add that all developments in the transportation field have social and civic consequences as well. Where transportation begins and ends, the community begins and ends. From any point of view, it's a feedback proposition.

Now, this interdependence which exists between every form of transportation and the community at large is one of the primary concerns of the Department. If the Department were expected to do no more than to monitor the trends of these relationships--keeping a sharp, clear focus, meanwhile, on the national interest--it would be doing what has never before been done in this country.

I expect the Department of Transportation to go far beyond that scholarly role. I believe that the President and the Congress intended this Agency to exercise some active and direct influence on the course of events.

For of all fields in which accelerating changes are taking place, none is proceeding more rapidly and few have a greater impact on our lives than those that are taking place in the transportation industry.

The personal benefits arising from increased mobility can hardly be overstated. But the negative aspects of the means of mobility have involved us, domestically, in the second great social crisis of this century.

How can I say anything about our streets and highways that you have not already heard repeated a thousand times? The appalling safety situation. The paralyzing effects of congestion in the central city. The ugly litter on the roadside. Strip development and suburban sprawl. Communities isolated, neighborhoods destroyed.

We have virtually lost control of the urban environment. We have allowed it to become hostile and repulsive.

Jets bring us noise, cars bring us pollution, diesels bring us filth, and transit brings us nowhere.

It is true that many of our citizens have been complaining about these abuses. Yet this recalls a remark ascribed to Frederick the Great, King of Prussia:



"My people and I have an agreement which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please."

The problem in transportation is that there seem to be Kings of Prussia scattered all over America.

These are the people who determine transportation investments. Sometimes planning and consulting with other Kings of Prussia. Sometimes not. Often deeply concerned with the public interest. But always handicapped in their judgments for lack of a clearly-stated national transportation policy, and by insufficient vehicles for coordination.

The Department's obligation is to provide standards which can serve as a rallying ground for community and industry-wide action, and then place the full prestige of the Federal Government behind their implementation. This process is already underway in

the case of the National Highway Safety Act of 1966, and its companion measure, the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act. These historic programs are nothing less than the public's decision to upgrade the entire automotive-highway technology as a way of minimizing accidents and other socially undesirable side-effects. I would consider these measures the prototypes of future efforts to improve and rationalize other phases of transportation in this country. In this connection, I should mention that a National Transportation Safety Board is soon to exist alongside the Department, with semi-autonomous authority, overseeing safety conditions in land and air transportation.

I have been speaking of very broad objectives; I think I must acknowledge certain practical and philosophical limitations.

To begin with, this Department cannot have a very pronounced influence on the transportation industry through purchasing power alone. We have, as I said, a budget of about \$6 billion. This is a very large amount, but not when compared to the total transportation economy. It is one-third smaller than the amount spent by the local and state Governments themselves on construction of transport facilities. And, as for the transportation purchases by all users, the total freight and passenger bill in America last year was said to be around \$150 billion!

So, as you see, the Department of Transportation does not loom very large in the market place.

What is more, since we do not live in the kind of political system which allows a central authority to impose its preferences, arbitrarily, on a private sector of the economy--for which I am thankful--all of us with a desire to improve conditions in this field are going to have to be extremely patient. We can educate, we can agitate, we can elucidate. We will do our best to persuade the assorted Kings of Prussia. But in the end, the only type of force we have at our disposal is the force of public opinion.

It is vastly encouraging to me, at the beginning of this endeavor, to feel that I will have your understanding and support. I think you will have reason to be quite proud of the Departmental staff. They are young, imaginative, dedicated men and women, whose skills are in great demand, both within the Government and in private industry. They have chosen to come over and help me make this a truly great Department.

If they perform half as well as I know they can, and I can perform twice as well as I know how, then President Johnson and the American people will be getting good value for their money.

What is it that we want this new Department to accomplish? What contribution do we expect it to make to the nation's welfare? How will it serve to improve the quality of our lives?

At the very least, this Department will work to make transportation more efficient, more economical and more expeditious.

We're going to insist that all forms of transportation become safer and more reliable for the ~~user~~, especially the passenger.

We'll want to see transportation continue to advance technologically, keeping pace with the progress of American industry, exploring new scientific possibilities.

The Department will encourage the transportation industry in a selective expansion program to serve the predictably expanding domestic market.

We'll work for success of our transport industry in foreign competition, not just for balance of payments reasons but because of a simple and honest pride in the home team.

Most emphatically, we want the transportation business to be a profitable business for its owners. For when it is, fresh investment capital becomes available as needed from private sources, and--most important form of capital--our bright and ambitious young men and women are attracted to the field.

We of course must insure that this industry will maintain a sufficient reserve capacity for national defense needs, and other emergencies.

We are going to try to find ways for transportation to assist in the economic development of depressed areas.

Above all, we wish transportation to make a more positive contribution to the urban environment of this country. Assuredly, we want an end to the noise, pollution and general disfigurement it has brought to our cities.

All of these are rational objectives, desirable objectives. Their achievement should come about almost automatically in an orderly, logical scheme of things.

But our nation's transportation system does not happen to be a neat and tidy operation, conforming to the symmetry of a mathematical model or engineering blueprint.

We have a great and glorious mixture. We have free enterprise and public ownership. We have common carriers and private carriers. We have a system that is partly subsidized, partly regulated, partly at war, partly in receivership and partly headed for the moon.

On the other side, we have these numerous Federal agencies concerned with bits and pieces of the total transportation picture, agencies that have never before worked together towards common goals.

It's going to require some sorting out.

We all have a lot to learn and good reason to fear that foot-in-mouth disease.

Meanwhile, piece by piece, we're going to start making some sense out of this confused mobility picture.

America is capable of the best and deserves the best. But the best, in transportation, is a matter for discovery.

We're looking for the kind of progress in transportation that people will never have cause to regret.

And if the advances are modest ones at first, I can assure you they will be real, and I hope they will be soon.

Thank you.