

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

41)

FOR RELEASE: PM's Friday, March 10, 1967

REMARKS BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, PREPARED
FOR DELIVERY BEFORE FOUNDERS' WEEK CONVOCATION, FLORIDA
SOUTHERN COLLEGE, LAKE LAND, FLORIDA, MARCH 10, 1967

I'm very happy to be participating in Founders' Week.

Florida Southern College is known for its educational leadership far beyond the central and west coast area. I have looked forward to this visit, and especially to some architectural sightseeing on your famous campus.

In Washington, as you know, I am involved in a founding exercise somewhat comparable in purpose, though minus the ceremonial features.

Officially, the Department of Transportation has not yet opened its doors, an event which will take place on the first of next month.

But already, outside the front entrance, there may figuratively be seen a very long line-up of the nation's transportation problems waiting to be solved.

Our newness at this job reminds me of the young doctor who had just started his practice and was, in fact, examining his first patient.

Though he saw the symptoms clearly enough, he was unable to think of a diagnosis. So he finally asked the patient, "Have you had this rash before?"

"Yes, doctor, I've had it twice before."

"Well," said the medic, "you've got it again."

I sincerely hope the new Department of Transportation will have more to offer its clients on April first.

For, a rash of transportation problems has broken out in our society, and by no means for the first time. Pollution, congestion, noises and accidents are the more familiar symptoms.

Not only are these more evident today, but the public perception of related problems has grown more acute.

We see declining central cities and uncoordinated suburban growth. We see lagging regional economies and expanding slums.

Even minor irritations of the past have reached the threshold of pain. The man-made ugliness along our highways has become intolerable.

And deeper injuries to community life caused by the haphazard planning of transportation facilities are no longer to be accepted.

America's transportation industry has also been suffering. The competitive position of our merchant marine has declined. The railroad passenger business is disappearing. The natural gas pipelines present a safety problem. Many trucking operations are marginal. And the accelerating pace of technological development has given the nation's airlines a serious investment problem.

One of President Johnson's fundamental purposes, in creating the new Department of Transportation, was to focus America's attention on the problems besetting, as well as arising from, the movement of people and goods.

Stated as a proposition--transportation affects society, but society also affects transportation.

For example, the Lakeland area has a number of great resources--phosphate production, citrus crop, unique natural environment. But none of these would have much value without the good railroads and highways that serve this district. On the other hand, you probably wouldn't have good railroads and highways without intelligent exploitation of the great natural resources that are here.

[And an able man like Congressman Jim Haley looking after your interests in Washington!]

The Department has the task of recommending to the President and the Congress a transportation policy we think is best suited to this country's needs and aspirations.

While economic considerations are of great significance,

they are not the ultimate aim of this program. We feel that transportation policy is one of the most important of your social choice mechanisms. It is an indirect way of voting for the style of life that is best for America.

All of us, individually, have an idea in the back of our minds--a mental picture of what America would be like under the best possible circumstances.

One of the great shocks of maturity is the discovery that other persons' definitions of that truly happy society are so much different from our own. We encounter perfectly law-abiding people whose values are at opposite ends of the scale.

That, of course, is what self-government is all about. We have to harmonize many discordant views. If we couldn't do that, this society of ours would tear itself apart.

Should it seem to you almost miraculous that that isn't happening all of the time, perhaps you should bless the memory of another group of Founders, in Philadelphia, in 1787.

Nevertheless, in transportation terms, there are always strong and valid differences of opinion on what is good or bad for this country. In a sense, each transportation investment, with private or public funds, represents the victory of an idea.

But sometimes the opposing ideas are fairly evenly matched. Then what occurs is like a page out of the

military history of Ancient Greece, in which it was customary, when two armies had fought to a draw, for each army to erect its own victory trophy on the same battlefield.

Thus, the skyscraper office building downtown represents a monument to public transportation, while the suburban shopping center epitomizes private transportation.

There has been a continuing and unequal struggle between the motorist and the transit rider to determine the character of the city. When viewed as a conflict of interest between city and suburb, the demands appear irreconcilable. For, the logic of the highway user would convert downtown real estate into a great parking lot. And the logic of the transit advocate would require city-like densities of population in the suburbs.

Such extreme positions, if politically sustained, would place your government in the position of supporting contradictory ideas. Our highway program might then be depicted as giving one group of citizens less and less of a stake in the future of the central city, while, at the same time, our public housing program would be binding another group of citizens ever more closely to that future.

I cannot accept this interpretation.

Whatever the short-run divergence of social interests, cities and their suburbs have a long-term community of economic interests. I believe that when public investments within a metropolitan area attempt to meet those interests equitably, they will in time cease to be articles of separation.

Some analysts have suggested that future Federal funds allocations to urban transportation facilities should include a new factor--the encouragement of coordination and reciprocities between city and suburban governments.

In this connection, I anticipate a very fruitful cooperation between the Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Especially in the great port cities and air-land traffic centers, the two Departments share heavy responsibilities.

Admittedly, the problems of our large metropolitan areas are physically remote from this beautiful campus. I am certain that a large proportion of the retirees who've come to live in the Lakeland area are, in a manner of speaking, refugees from undesirable big-city conditions.

But those conditions are part of the contemporary environment with which most of you who anticipate a role in urban life must come to terms.

Let me confess that the environment of my own youth was about as remote from the metropolis as one can get. I grew up in the rural hinterland of north Florida, in a village of 600 population called Macclenny. The town sold naval stores and had a saw mill, and that was about all there was to Macclenny. We raised cotton and tobacco on our farm, which I left at an early age.

They tell me that Macclenny was originally settled by refugees from the laws of Georgia and the Carolinas. I can

believe that, because even in my childhood there were violent types roaming the village, and blood feuds in the back country.

I can't recall that Macclenny had any transportation problems of its own, but I understand it gave some to other people. There was a train that used to whiz right by the town without stopping, and one day one of our local citizens tried to flag it down with a pistol. He put a few holes through the Pullman windows.

For a long time afterwards, the conductor used to make the passengers duck down in their seats when the train went by Macclenny.

The old-timers had some curious beliefs. I guess you would call them folk-sayings.

They said, "Kill a toad-frog and your cows will die."

They said, "If you want it to rain, bury a cricket."

They said, "If you wear two hats, you'll get a whipping before sundown."

When I was a boy I tried all three, but only one really worked. I'll leave you to guess which one.

With this background, you may better understand why I feel that cities and their suburbs are all one thing when compared to a really rural community.

There are of course very real differences among urban area residents which have transportation implications.

These, I repeat, are not based on local political boundaries.

They are based, as I suggested earlier, on differing sets of personal values. And they get us into some rather profound philosophical issues. Such as mobility versus responsibility.

Personal mobility is/a ^{certainly} legitimate goal. But so is social responsibility.

I could pose this issue in other terms. I could say, Free choice and community efficiency. Or self-assertion in contrast to self-discipline.

But allow me to use the term that has become, in our generation, almost synonymous with the automobile.

Personal mobility, it seems to me, has always ranked among the highest of values in America. It was dominant long before the internal combustion engine. Freedom to move about was basic in the minds of the Founders of this country and, of course, a necessary condition for the east-to-west development of the continent.

You may be sure that the refugees who have settled in this country throughout its history brought with them a special appreciation of mobility.

You may be sure that tens of millions of farm boys and girls who migrated to the cities, brought with them a special appreciation of mobility.

You would expect that any population group, such as American Negroes, with a memory of former slave conditions, would also place a very high value on freedom of movement.

Given these historical circumstances, America was the natural place for an automobile. In that invention, our fathers and grandfathers saw the possibility of achieving a fuller measure of personal freedom than had ever before been possible.

Consider what the automobile allows.

It allows you to choose your home with very little reference to where you work.

It gives you a much wider choice of goods, services, entertainment and recreation.

It helps you maintain personal ties at great distances; and it helps you to insulate yourself by distance from undesired relationships.

By providing you with outside alternatives and support, the automobile helps you to resist social pressures close at home. You have a freer and wider choice of affiliation or non-affiliation.

It gives you privacy. It allows you to move about anonymously when you feel like it.

It gives you a means of movement for movement's sake, without commitment as to ultimate destination.

These are some of the blessings of mobility. Yet there is another value which many people cherish. In some ways it is the opposite of freedom of movement.

Let us call it personal identity.

This is certainly a value, and it arises, I believe, from needs associated with immobility.

The need for loyalty to some place.

The need to throw in one's lot with a group of people.

The need to feel good about one's community.

The need to feel that one has made a contribution.

The need to be responsible.

The need to be respected by one's neighbors.

The pleasure of obedience to just laws.

Further considering this question of the individual and society, I am aware that many people would regard even a very slight curtailment of their mobility as an act impairing pursuit of happiness, if not life and liberty itself. But I wonder if there is not another value equally worthy of passionate attachment?

We do have the problem of congestion. We do have the problem of air pollution. We do have the problem of noise and ugliness. We do have the problem of property damage and injuries and fatalities.

Can there be any way of coping with these problems? Can society's interests be served without some measure of impairment to our precious freedom of movement and freedom of choice?

It is a real question.

It is what government is all about.

It is what transportation policy is all about.

Today, March tenth, is the anniversary of another famous invention. An invention which has, in its own way, done much to improve the quality of life in this country. An invention which also has manifested some undesirable side-effects, including disturbing one's privacy, and practically destroying the art of letter-writing.

On this day, ninety-one years ago, the first telephone message was fully communicated.

It was an impromptu message that nobody intended to communicate that way. It was Alexander Graham Bell calling to his assistant for help.

My message today, though not as historic, and not as impromptu, is still a call for help.

The transportation problems of your nation are serious ones. The government needs your help. The transportation industry needs your help. The community needs your help.

We need the assistance of colleges and universities.

We need fresh insights from the academic disciplines.

We need to focus more of the nation's intellectual resources on the problems of transportation.

We need to attract more professionally trained men and women to the field of transportation.

This institution of yours, and others like it, exists for the purpose of multiplying the advantages of intellect to yourself and society.

Boyd/12

I can think of no field of endeavor in which the application of intelligence will bring greater rewards to the individual and society than that which is concerned with the movement of goods and people.

On behalf of the new Department of Transportation, I thank you, President Thrift, for the privilege of participating in this Founders' Week observance.