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REMARKS BY ALAN S. BOYD, UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
FOR TRANSPORTATION, PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE
THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN TRANS-
PORTATION AT THE PITTSBURGH HILTON HOTEL, PITTSBURGH,
PENNSYLVANIA, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1966 AT 7:00 P.M.

This meeting, in itself, indicates where we stand today in transportation planning and transportation doing.

If this were the 50th such meeting -- instead of the first, I'm sure we would be much farther along, but I'm also sure that we still would be facing some of the mammoth problems that confront us today -- in all forms of transport in all corners of the Nation:

In coming here to discuss urban transportation, I found myself asking the question:

"Is it an urban transportation problem that confronts us?
Or is it simply an urban problem?"

More and more people are flocking to our cities to seek a better life.

More than 65 per cent of our people now live in metropolitan areas. Urban population between now and the end of the century is expected to increase by more than 80 per cent.

In the next decade and a half we will add some 30 million people in our cities. This is equivalent to the combined population of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit and Baltimore.

Many of our older, established cities are becoming huge clusters. For example, that strip of land between Southern New Hampshire and Northern Virginia -- commonly known as the Northeast Corridor -- represents less than 2 per cent of our Nation's land area but contains 21 per cent of our population.

Similar urban giants are emerging along the West Coast, the Great Lakes, the Gulf of Mexico, the Coast of Florida, and in the interior of our Nation as well.

As President Johnson has reminded us:

"In the remainder of this century, urban population will double, city land will double, and we will have to build in our cities as much as all that we have built since the first colonist arrived on these shores."

In other words, we've got about 35 years to rebuild the entire urban United States.

That appears as a staggering task, but for this gathering it also presents a tremendous opportunity.

If we have the courage and the foresight and the follow-through, we could start in right now and build the kind of orderly and efficient system of inter-city and intra-city transport that the remainder of this century is sure to demand.

But this calls for bold and almost revolutionary political action at all levels of Government, the kind of political action that is impossible in a Democratic society without a new surge of education and understanding of the problems by our people.

Our researchers, our economists, our engineers and our centers of learning understand the problem. But our task is to get more people to understand it and then start working at it intelligently.

Our institutions of higher learning can generate a lot of traffic engineers, construction engineers, economists and planners who can show us how to take hold of the problem. But that won't solve it. The biggest job will be educating the populace to pave the way for the political decision and action which must supercede the physical efforts.

Everyone here, I'm sure, is familiar with a situation wherein merchants on a street rise up as one to oppose turning their street into a one-way artery of traffic. We will have to mount the kind of educational efforts that will convince them that such a move is in the public interest of their city, their states, and their Nation.

This may sound trite and a little like flag-waving, but it is a fundamental illustration of the problem we face. We face it in trying to automate our transportation machinery. We face it in trying to work out a formula which will prevent crippling strikes. We face it in trying to work out a sound and economical solution of our nation's merchant marine problem. We face it when we try to get agreement on installing a traffic light at a dangerous intersection. And we face it in trying to work out a national transportation policy which is fair and equitable to our transportation industry, to our shippers and to our consumers.

We have many technological wonders available in the field of transportation today which aren't working to capacity. because of this lack of knowledge and understanding and leadership -- both in the private sector and in the public or governmental sector.

The fully-automated Transit Expressway Model in Pittsburgh's South Park, which many of us at this gathering have been or will be privileged to inspect, as a case in point here.

If we lived in a totalitarian society, we could order our transporters and our citizens to like one-way streets, to praise automation, to change their way of living overnight.

But we live in a free society where every man is an opinion maker and a decision maker, and we have to enlighten him to convince him -- not bludgeon him. And that's the way we intend to keep it.

This Administration's basic philosophy in transportation is built around this principle. President Johnson has stressed that more reliance should be placed on competition than on economic regulation; that broad policy guidelines are preferable to narrow, detailed rules and regulations thus giving management a flexibility in which to develop and grow and serve the skyrocketing traffic demands of the remainder of this century.

The President's call for creation of a new Cabinet-level Department of Transportation is a promising step in this direction.

As you know, the economic regulations of transport will not be included in the legislation which the President will send to Congress on this subject.

That means that the new Department will be concerned primarily with matters of policy, of organization, of promotion, of the gathering and dissemination of knowledge. It can and should become the focal point of information and leadership in the effort to better inform our citizens on the kind of political decisions that must be made if we are to forge the kind of transportation system that the future of this Nation demands.

As President Johnson noted in his State of the Union Message, there are at least 35 different agencies of the Federal Government involved in transportation matters.

Certainly it makes sense to try to gather these loose ends and achieve some unity of purpose. Our efforts in the field of research and development alone would seem to demand that we do it. Many of these agencies are carrying on R&D projects it is safe to assume that all 35 of them do not know what the other 34 are doing, not only in R&D, but in many other endeavors as well.

This is not meant as an indictment of any branch of Government or any individual or groups of individuals. It's simply human nature that an official, who is worth his salt, who is assigned to do a certain job, throws himself into it like it was the most important assignment in the world.

This individual drive for excellence is one of the things that makes our country so great. It is a challenge too, to our Administrative genius to marshal it and channel it into specific and comprehensive programs and directions.

If we ever needed reminding of how vital orderly transportation is to our city dwellers, the big storm which hit us in the East over the weekend should jar us out of our lethargy.

We simply don't have any programs or plans at the Federal level for dealing with such catastrophes. And we've certainly had our share of them in recent months -- the Alaska earthquake, Hurricane Betsy in the Gulf Coast area, the floods in California and the West, the recent black out in the Northeast section of the Nation.

We do have a planning program in the Office of Emergency Transportation designed to help the nation weather a war-time type of emergency. And it is looking into these recent catastrophes, but more with an eye to help it do its assigned job. Most of our political subdivisions and regions don't have the resources to meet such calamities, and the Federal Government frequently steps in with emergency aid. I suggest we could do a much more effective job in this field, given the proper mandate.

I don't want to leave the impression here that the creation of a new Department of Transportation could solve all our problems overnight.

Nor do I want to leave behind the idea that our cities are in danger of choking to death because our system of transport isn't sufficient to serve them.

Our cities today are growing concerns, growing and thriving, and all indications are that they will continue to do so. Some may need a valve job or a transmission over-haul or their worms may be suffering from smoke and air pollution, but they could hardly be described as ready for the grim reaper.

What I am trying to say, however, is that it is high time we got started with the initial task of marshalling the information and data and training the skilled professionals we will need to make an intelligent start.

A first step, it seems to us, is the setting up of a headquarters which will give more rhyme and reason and order and efficiency to our efforts.

We see such a headquarters, or department, as the most logical answer to an urgent need for developing an updated national transportation policy which will apply to the total transportation system -- rural as well as urban, international as well as domestic, and encompassing all modes and combinations of modes.

We see it as a central organization for the allocation of resources where the resources to be expended by the United States are competing for relative priority only against the requirements and demands of other transportation functions -- and not against totally unrelated objectives of government.

And most important, we see it, in the light of rapid population and community growth, as a strong agency capable of coordinating and fostering and promoting and inspiring utilization of much needed total transportation research and development.

The Federal Government already is heavily involved in urban transportation planning and building. The Interstate Highway System is helping our cities build freeways and inner- and outer-belt systems for which they would otherwise be hard pressed to find the resources.

The Bureau of Public Roads, which supervises the construction of the Interstate System, is also making these days the largest Governmental contribution to community planning that this Nation's cities have ever before experienced.

Working with the new Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Bureau of Public Roads is assisting financially some 224 urban communities with comprehensive community plans which involve not only highways and roads but the whole gamut of land use and orderly community planning.

The last session of Congress authorized a wide range of research and development in the field of high speed ground transportation. This includes the Northeast Corridor Project which later this year plans to launch demonstration runs on a couple of Eastern railroads to see how the public might respond to faster, improved and more comfortable railroad passenger service.

We can't rely forever on automotive vehicles to keep carrying more and more of our freight and passenger haul. We have to find ways of utilizing to capacity some of the mass transit modes already in existence, or perhaps even turn to creating entirely new systems.

For in the transportation industry we don't have 35 years to rebuild. If transportation's growth merely keeps pace with our economic growth, it's capacity will at least double in the 20-year period ending in 1980. That leaves 20 years in this century, and this could mean doubling our transport facilities once again.

So that task, I think we can all agree, is gigantic.

This first International Conference on Urban Transportation signals that the leadership of the transportation industry is ready to make a beginning.

We have a lot of things going for us. We have demonstrated to ourselves and to the world in our conquest of space what a free nation can do when it puts its best minds and best technicians to work on a problem.

I would hope that we could give the same attention, the same sense of urgency, to the problems of urban and inter-city transportation as we have expended in our efforts to be the first to reach the moon.

The race for mobility on Main Street and its connecting avenues and boulevards and parking lots may not be as spectacular as the race to the moon, but winning it will be a lot more rewarding and will enrich the lives of a lot more Americans.