

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

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REMARKS BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION,  
PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE THE OPENING SESSION OF  
THE SEVENTH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF THE  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL  
ORGANIZATIONS AT THE AMERICANA HOTEL IN BAL HARBOUR, FLORIDA,  
ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1967, AT 4:00 P.M.

I cannot describe the warm feeling which your invitation  
spread through my office in Washington.  
My staff has spent the past several days stumbling around  
in the snow, saying over and over again:  
"We're going south."  
The temperature shall rise again.

Unfortunately, the job of Secretary of Transportation is one  
job you can't get away from just by taking a trip.

Coming south, for example, reminded me of the man who got on  
a train in Washington, dead tired, and begged the porter  
to be sure to wake him up in Jacksonville.

The porter promised.

And when the traveler woke up in Miami, he blistered the porter.  
A bystander said to the porter:

"Boy, he was sure upset."

And the porter said: "That's nothing.

You should have heard the guy I put off the train at Jackson-  
ville."

The point is that too much of our transportation system seems  
to be in conspiracy against the traveler.

The problem in many parts of the country is not so much getting  
off a train at the right stop, but finding a train to get  
on in the first place.

One may hurtle through the air at ever-faster speeds from city  
to city, only to find himself helplessly stacked up above  
his destination for as long as it took him to get there.

The commuter faces the twice-a-day nightmare of streets jammed  
with cars, an experience guaranteed to unsettle the nerves,  
rumple the clothing, offend the nostrils - and leave him  
with little faith, small hope and absolutely no charity for  
one's fellow motorists.

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In short, the worst part of getting from one place to another seems to be that you have to travel to do it.

We have not deluded ourselves that the creation of a Department of Transportation suddenly bestows upon us some new and magic power to cure the nation's transportation troubles.

We do not have the answers.

We may not have them for some time.

And it is certain, in my mind, that we will not arrive at them unaided.

We shall seek the advice of all elements of the transportation industry in helping to solve the problems that face us.

And let me assure you that this will, in a large measure, include the help of the American labor movement.

The shaping of the balanced transportation system so needed by this nation is not and cannot be the sole responsibility of a government agency far removed from the problems which are highly local in character.

It must be recognized, I believe, that the forging of an efficient transportation system out of what is now merely a collection of methods of moving people and goods is your problem as well as ours.

The well-being, and even the jobs, of your members depends on our being able to avoid the chaos into which our transportation network could easily slip unless we make a determined effort to make sure that it will not happen.

Who among you can say that traffic congestion is not of immediate concern to your interests as union leaders?

The time it takes a worker to get to his job; the fact that he cannot take a job because he cannot get from home to plant - indeed, may not even be able to get to the employment office; the impact of the inefficient movement of goods on the level of jobs - all of these must concern you as they concern us in the Department.

The problems of our transportation system touch everyone; no one can remain aloof.

And no wonder.

Transportation represents a tremendous investment.

It generates one-fifth of our gross national product.

There is almost nothing bought, sold, eaten, enjoyed, or otherwise consumed that does not depend on transportation.

I am not much of a believer in the recitation of statistics but I do think that one set of figures will give you some idea of the transportation demand we face within the next decade.

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The increase in number of cars, trucks and buses which will be on the streets between now and 1975 will almost exactly equal the expected growth in the population.

That creates a host of problems.

The coming growth of transportation demand is going to place heavy demands on all of our shoulders.

What is thrusting that burden to our shoulders is not only the accelerating demand for transportation services, but the rush of transportation technology.

Indeed, the advances in technology in this field are outracing our abilities to keep up with them.

What we must learn, all of us, is how to adjust to the new technology, how to harness it rather than having it ride us.

But we seem, in this world today, to be transfixed - even paralyzed - by what we see happening around us.

We are, I fear, clinging too long to outdated forms and obsolete institutions just because they are familiar havens which appear to block out the risks and uncertainties of having to try something new.

This is not a problem peculiar to any particular segment of our society; it is an across-the-board ailment.

We are as hindered by rigidities of form and institution in the governmental sector as any that can be found in the private sector.

Yet this is not a luxury we can afford to tolerate.

The price of refusing to believe that things can or ought to change can be the loss of opportunities to gain firm and effective control of the forces at work in this complex economy.

Nowhere is there a greater demand that old forms and thoughts be re-studied than in the field of transportation.

I am firmly convinced that the creation of the Department of Transportation is an important step in this direction.

It gives us the opportunity, if we can but seize it, to re-think the old problems.

It gives the opportunity to break out of the mold of thinking of transportation only in terms of railroads, or of airplanes, or of cars, or trucks, or roads.

Instead, we are directing our thoughts to thinking of all the modes of transportation in terms of what they really are - the interrelated parts of a vast and complex transportation system, each with its impact on the other.

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Our aim is nothing more revolutionary than carrying out President Johnson's mandate to give the United States safer, more efficient, and better coordinated means of traveling and shipping goods.

We do not have the answers yet.

What success we will have at arriving at the answers will depend on the questions we ask.

And we are prepared, to challenge - in fact we are, challenging - the "why" of everything we are now doing in transportation.

We have, however, arrived at some definite opinions that we intend to follow as closely as possible in the carrying out of our mission.

We do not believe that, despite the overwhelming favor of the American public for the auto as a means of transportation, we should condone or collaborate in an aimless proliferation of freeways.

We do not believe the answer to the problems of the central city can be solved with bulldozers.

We do not believe that the passenger train is dead as a means of transporting people.

If we did, we would not be deeply involved in a program to establish 120-mile-an-hour modern train service between Washington and New York City.

We would not be bending our efforts to establish similar service with the turbo-train between New York and Boston.

We believe that these experiments can and will lead to the revitalization of passenger train service between major metropolitan centers.

We do not believe that containerization needs to be a scare word either to the transportation industry, or to transportation labor.

We do believe that what are viewed now as the problems raised by containerization can and will be resolved to the mutual benefit of industry and labor.

We do not believe that it is necessary to kill 50,000 persons a year on our highways.

We do believe that a rational, feasible safety program can and will be devised with evident benefits to consumers such as yourselves in terms of lower insurance costs, lower auto repair costs - and far safer travel on the nation's streets and highways.

And the record of the first nine months of this year shows we are beginning to back up that belief with action.

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For the first time in several years, there were fewer people killed in highway accidents during the first three-quarters of this year than during the same period of the year before.

We do not believe that the time has yet come to sound the death knell over our existing local transit systems in favor of such future near-fantasies as mono-rail trains, air-jet capsules flung through tubes, or electric autos.

Think, for a moment, on the possibility of free transit in our major cities.

We think enough of the idea to have awarded a research contract for a six-month study to measure the economic, social, technological and financial factors of such a system.

We do believe that a total transportation system, wisely conceived and intelligently fitted together, can help revitalize our central cities.

We do believe that there is no more important task of this transportation system than to make sure that jobs and people are brought closer together, in terms of time and ease of travel if not distance.

We do believe that an efficient, coordinated transportation system can and will be a maker of jobs, and not a destroyer. And it is a primary aim of this Department to see that this is a most important end result.

We in the country have a staggering investment in our present transportation system.

We are not, at present, getting the proper return from it.

I speak not only of the dollar investment, but the investment of manpower that is one of our most important resources.

It is vital that we not dissipate this investment by misusing it.

How we man our trains; how we man our airport facilities; how we make transportation a job maker and not a job breaker; how we allocate manpower for the movement of goods - these are areas in which change is going to occur, whether we like it or not.

It is up to all of us to be prepared for this change lest it get so far beyond our control that we can do nothing more than hang on and hope.

This is not, as I have said, an area in which the government can accomplish the task by itself - nor does it want to.

It takes planning - long and careful planning.

It takes a willingness to adapt old institutions and ideas to take advantage of new challenges.

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It takes participation by an aware and interested citizenry. The problem of evolving an efficient and coordinated transportation system is too important a job to be left to the experts.

And I know of no more aware and interested citizenry in the problems of solving the urban and other social problems than the American labor movement.

Quite frankly, this is a job we cannot accomplish without the participation of labor.

From my admittedly limited associations with you in my present role as Secretary of Transportation, I have an admiration for your origination of ideas in many fields, and for your abilities to rise to new challenges.

We look for you to play an important role in the task we have before us.

Let me tell you as emphatically as I can that we want to hear your views.

We intend to keep our ears and our minds as well as our doors open.

We are not always going to see eye to eye.

At times, we may possibly differ quite strenuously.

But because we may differ on one aspect of how best to solve the problems of transportation doesn't mean at all that we should quit talking to each other entirely.

I believe that the benefits to the public interest from a close cooperation between us will in the end far outweigh the differences we may have.

In every challenge which has been placed before the American people, the American labor movement has been among the first to respond.

That is a splendid record.

The challenge before us in transportation is to start deciding what kind of transportation network this country should have in 1980.

To do this right, we must pool the knowledge of the people who design the transportation, the people who will finance it, the people who will build it, the people who will operate it - and the people who will use it.

As the builders, operators and - as a substantial segment of the public - the users of transportation, this country's labor movement is a most essential part of this process.

In the last analysis, our aim is to advance the public interest. I know that is your aim as well.

And, with your help, that is what we shall do.

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