

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
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REMARKS BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE THE EDITOR'S DAY LUNCHEON MINNEAPOLIS AQUATENNIAL PIC-NICOLLETTE HOTEL, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, JULY 15, 1967, 11:30 A.M.

It is always a pleasure to visit this splendid city, and I'm particularly happy to be here during what must surely rank as one of the world's great festivals.

We know a lot about Minneapolis -- and about Minnesota -- in Washington. You have given us, and the nation, some of its most distinguished public servants -- men like Vice-President Humphrey, Gene McCarthy, Walter Mondale, Don Fraser, and Orville Freeman.

And we know it's no accident that you have produced so many men of such extraordinary ability. It didn't take you long to make pennant-winners out of a former Washington baseball team that seemed to have a life-time lease on the cellar.

It must be all that sky-blue water.

As this audience -- and the citizens of this area -- have good reason to know, that water is not only great for sport. It is also great for transport. And transportation -- of all kinds -- has played a crucial role in the growth of this region.

For more than a century after this region was discovered, the canoe was its main means of travel. Then came the keelboat -- and in 1823 the

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steamboat. In the 1860's came the railroad -- and the region was on its way to becoming a major center for rail as well as water transportation. And it was not far from here, across the river at Fort Snelling, that there occurred one of those obscure but important events which would help alter the course of history. There, in 1862, a young German military attaché, Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, conceived the idea of a lighter-than-air craft, and in 1864 made his first ascent in a balloon.

Today, a little more than 100 years later, we have planes that fly faster than sound -- spacecraft that orbit the earth -- and rockets that reach the moon.

Yet while we can orbit the earth in 90 minutes -- it takes longer than that to get from downtown Washington to downtown New York.

And that is one reason for the establishment of the new Department of Transportation.

It is not that we have done so badly in transportation -- we have, in fact, developed a transportation system far superior to any other in the world.

It is simply that, in the decades ahead, we have to do far better -- for, so great has been the growth of our transportation system, and the society it serves, that we can no longer cope with either the problems or the opportunities it presents by continuing to follow the fitful, fragmented approach of the past.

The new Department gives us, for the first time, an instrument, a framework, a focal point that enables us first, to look at our transportation system as a single whole and second, to relate it to the total needs of our society.

And let me emphasize -- at the outset -- that it is no more, and no less, than an instrument, a framework, a focal point for developing a coherent and cooperative approach -- involving all levels of government and all segments of our society -- toward meeting the nation's transportation needs.

The new Department is not -- as no doubt some may view it -- simply another example of a burgeoning Federal bureaucracy, of creeping or galloping centralization, of another attempt on the part of the Federal Government to extend its sway over areas more properly reserved to other levels of government or to private enterprise.

President Johnson intended -- the Congress intended -- and I intend -- the new Department to be a working example of the approach the President has termed "creative federalism."

That approach rests upon the conviction -- in the President's words -- that "to survive and serve the ends of a free society, our Federal system must be strengthened -- and not alone at the national level. ... We began as a nation of localities. And however changed in character those localities became, however urbanized we grow and however we build, our destiny as a Nation will be determined there."

Indeed, I sense a widespread and growing awareness in this country that we can no longer afford to indulge in arid, ideological arguments about "the evils of big government" or the obsolescence of state and local governments.

We have begun to abandon the always erroneous notion that there is some kind of inherent enmity or incompatibility between the Federal government on the one hand and the state and local governments on the other -- that somehow we must choose between one or the other -- that we must swear eternal and undivided allegiance to the one and eternal and undivided opposition to the other.

We have begun to understand that an extension of Federal activity does not necessarily mean an erosion, in equal amount, of State or local authority -- as if there is some sort of fixed and immutable quantity of total government involvement, so that one level of government can grow only at the expense of the other.

We have come, instead, to appreciate the very simple truth that an effective Federal system requires that every level of government be strong and supple, and that all levels of government share jointly -- and fully -- in the common task of improving the lot of our citizens.

One thing that most urban areas in the country have in common is a transportation problem. And each can learn something about solving its own problems by observing the experience of others. But it is equally true

that Boston, say, and Minneapolis and Los Angeles have fundamentally different transportation problems for the simple reason that they are fundamentally different cities. Every important aspect of a city's life is affected and influenced -- often deeply and directly -- by its transportation system.

For that reason any decision to alter a city's transportation system must follow upon a host of other decisions involving the very size and character of the city itself.

It is the people of the city themselves who -- through their officials -- can alone make these decisions. And when I speak of cities, I mean our smaller as well as our larger cities -- I mean our counties and our rural communities as well as our heavily urbanized areas.

We intend, therefore, in the Department of Transportation to keep in close touch with our State and local officials throughout the Nation, and with those who operate and those who manage our transportation system. Within my immediate office, I have established liaison units for State and local governments and transportation industry and labor. The men who head these offices have one important job -- to maintain a constant line of communication with our Governors and Mayors and leaders in the transportation field.

And let me repeat here what I have said elsewhere: I am one who believes that there is some truth to past charges that the Federal Government has sometimes acted in ways that can only be considered arbitrary by State

and local officials. I do not believe it possible to sit in Washington, alone and unaided, and come up with adequate solutions to the particular problems faced by cities and counties and States hundreds and, sometimes, thousands of miles away. All too often I believe it has been the practice of Federal officials to ask State and local officials to conform to national standards established without regard for the frequently very different needs of very different areas of the country.

I am convinced, as I know President Johnson is convinced, that it is time to amend these attitudes and to end these practices wherever they exist. And we are taking action in this area -- in my Department and throughout the Federal government. Under President Johnson's leadership, we are trying to restructure our Federal effort and to render it far more relevant and responsive to the needs of our States and localities.

For example, we have in this country far and away the best highway system in the world. Yet, as we are beginning to realize, we have often been so exclusively concerned with economy in our highway program that we have overlooked the enormous economic and social impact that highways have upon the cities and regions through which they pass.

All too often we have tended to select that route that will give us the straightest possible line at the lowest possible cost.

Yet we all know the severe social and economic dislocation that can result from that kind of narrow approach. Neighborhoods, and at times entire cities, can be split in two. Thousands can be left without housing -- often those least able to afford new housing -- and some of the finest aesthetic and cultural assets of our cities can be destroyed.

I am aware, as well, of the profound impact highways can have on our more rural areas.

Indeed, while the Federal Interstate System constitutes only about 1.2 percent of all road and street mileage in America, it will pass through over one-third of the nation's counties. These counties contain more than half the nation's population, and account for about half of all farm products sold. Over 80 per cent of the mileage covered by, and about 95 per cent of the area needed for, the Interstate System are in rural America.

I need not tell this informed audience of the enormous opportunities this vast network of highways can present for the economic and social and cultural growth of rural America. Nor need I tell you of some of the disturbances and difficulties it can cause -- when a highway, for example, passes so close by a town or a city that it stunts its growth, or when it passes so far away that it isolates a town or city from the mainstream of life.

I am well aware of both the opportunities and the obstacles to growth that our highways can offer. And I can assure you that the continued vigor and viability of rural America will be among our first concerns in the future development of our Federal highway system.

In our highway program -- as in our total transportation effort -- we must begin to take a far more comprehensive approach. We must begin -- and begin now -- to look at our highways and our other forms of transportation in the context of our total needs as a society.

That is what we are trying to do -- now -- in the Department of Transportation. And we are trying to do it by working and talking with leaders in our local communities, our cities and our states -- as well as in the transportation industry and related fields -- for it is they who are not only close to the people, but close to the problems.

The President put it this way in his State of the Union Message:  
"Federal energy is essential. But it is not enough. Only a total working partnership among Federal, State and local governments can succeed. The test of that partnership will be the concern of each public organization, each private institution, and each responsible citizen."