

22)

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

REMARKS BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION,
PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE THE FUND RAISING DINNER
FOR CONGRESSMAN MCFALL, MANTECA, CALIFORNIA, FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 10, 1967, 6:30 P.M.

It is a pleasure to come here tonight to speak well of
Congressman John McFall. He is known in Washington as a man
who speaks softly and carries more than his share of responsibility
not only for his district but for the State, the President and the
Democratic Party.

There is always something unreal -- for people who know
John McFall -- to hear him called the whip of the California delegation.
The whip isn't his style. His style is the long day at the office, the
briefcase full of homework and the construction of an argument for
programs he cares about that is so detailed nobody can argue with it.

Fortunately for us, he cares as deeply about a better system of
transportation for the United States as he did about the New Hogan Dam
and the New Melones Dam. And when history deals with the day that
Americans decided to make a national effort to develop faster, safer
and more efficient transportation, it will find that John McFall was --
in this, as in other things -- one of the indispensable men.

(more)

There are, of course, other things about this district that are attractive to an after-dinner speaker. For one thing, it is in California. For another, it is one of the few districts in the country where -- if the remarks don't go over too well -- you can escape by land, sea or air.

And it does take a certain amount of nerve to come to this State and lecture about transportation. California practically invented it. Among the 50 states, you hold a virtual monopoly on mobility and the means of attaining it and enjoying it. And, in a nation with the world's best system of transportation, that is no small achievement.

The Department of Transportation officially became a part of the national government on April 1. And we are at that awkward stage of any successful union. We are still proud to show off the ring but a little embarrassed when people ask us if there's anything we want to tell them.

And there are days at the office when the schedule includes problems of traffic jams in the cities, traffic jams at the airports, freeway revolts and letters from youngsters who don't like daylight savings -- there are days that remind me of the man who was cornered in a jungle by a lion. And when the man sank to his knees, so did the lion. And the lion said: "I don't know what you're doing, but I'm saying grace."

There are nearly 100-million cars, trucks and buses in the United States today, rolling on nearly three-million miles of streets and highways. There are well over 100-thousand private and commercial airplanes, flying more than one-billion miles a year. As the country grows, so does its need for more and better transportation. It is the one thing you must have to read a book, serve a meal, sell a vacuum cleaner or fight a war.

But accommodating the growth is no longer as simple as doubling our highway mileage or tripling our runways. The soft jobs in transportation are behind us, because we can no longer afford to ignore the fourth dimension of transportation -- its effect on the environment. Transportation today determines not only how well we can move in our cities but how well we can live in them. It can be noisy or silent, cause discord or create harmony, serve us or entrap us.

(more)

Because of its remarkable growth, California faces many of these problems to a greater degree than most states. So it is no surprise that you have, in Los Angeles, what many experts call the best-run airport in the nation. Or that you have in San Francisco the first new rail rapid transit network of this century. Or that you are the undisputed leader in highway construction. And it is also no surprise that yours was the first State to explore the use of system analysis to deal with transportation as a total mechanism rather than as a disconnected collection of highways, trucks, runways, railroads and docks.

Nobody would dream of showing up for a football game with eleven men, all pursuing some private little game plan of their own. Yet that is precisely the way we have gone about building this country's transportation network. And that is why President Johnson asked Congress to create our Department to provide a national base for the work of giving America a transportation system in more than name only.

In his message to Congress, the President said: "Our transportation system has not emerged from a single drawing board, on which the needs and capacities were all charted. It could not have done so, for it grew along with the country itself -- now restlessly expanding, now consolidating, as opportunity grew bright or dim."

The result, he said, is that America "lacks a coordinated transportation system that permits travelers and goods to move conveniently and efficiently from one means of transportation, using the best characteristics of each."

Said the President: "Both people and goods are compelled to conform to the system as it is"

Our job -- in the broadest sense -- is to reverse that order -- to compel the system to conform to the needs of travelers and the shippers of goods and to the needs of the people who live by the side of the road or off the end of the runway.

We do not intend to change everything about American transportation in the next several years, but we do intend to challenge everything about it.

We will ask in every phase of transportation: Is there a better way?

(more)

The questions are easier to ask than to answer. Each answer will involve long and painstaking study. What seems to be a good answer must be tested under actual operating conditions. And we will have to operate on two levels -- one to gather information about the kind of system we want 50 years from now; the other to find ways to improve the way we use what we already have.

We are, for example, about to begin a study of so-called free public transit. We want to know whether a city would gain in paying for a transit system the same way it pays for paving streets -- as a community cost rather than a cost at the fare-box.

We are trying to encourage experiments with the use of reserved lanes on freeways for buses to determine whether some commuters can be attracted from their cars to ease peak-hour congestion.

We are working with the Pennsylvania Railroad on the first high-speed train service in the country, a run which will carry passengers between New York and Washington at speeds up to 120 miles an hour. We hope to learn whether people -- who have lost the habit of train travel -- can be coaxed back to trains if trains are faster, more comfortable and more reliable. If so, it may well be that such service will provide an attractive alternative for trips between other large metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, and Chicago and Detroit.

Our longer-range research indicates that radically different forms of transportation are within our grasp in the not-too-distant future.

For example, one project suggests that laser beams may be used to tunnel under cities, rapidly and at dramatically lower costs than present digging techniques. This could prevent much of the conflict that presently exists between the freeway and many of our cities. Other research suggests that tracked air-cushion vehicles capable of speeds up to 250 miles an hour could be built in the near future if we concentrate major resources on its development.

Now, I know that you didn't come here tonight just to hear about transportation. You came because you respect John McFall and because you are involved in the political process. You are involved because you know that, in a democracy, politics is the way you tell your government where to head and when to head in.

(more)

Involvement in politics is the way you fight for pure water and safe streets; for garbage collection and control of nuclear weapons. You are here because you believe in better schools and a chance for the poor to share in America's abundance. You are here because you believe with de Tocqueville that "the end of good government is to ensure the welfare of the people, not merely to establish order in the midst of their misery."

And transportation is just one area in which President Johnson and the Congress have responded to the needs of the nation.

We have always prided ourselves on being a party of diversity. We have always gotten along on small servings of unity, because that is all we had on the table.

But we need more unity today.

Not just because the Republican Party has fielded a few winners lately -- although in less remarkable times that would have been reason enough to close ranks.

Not just because the United States is committed to helping the people of South Viet Nam fight for their right to choose their own form of government -- although in any time that would be reason enough to pull together.

We need unity now to stand off the extremists of the new left and the old right to make room in the center for President Johnson to get on with the work of America.

More than unity, we need clear, straight talk to counter the ridiculous arguments that cutting expenses will somehow cut air pollution and crime;

-- that letting down our guard will somehow raise our hopes for peace;

-- that in the most complex industrial nation in the world, righteous indignation will serve us as well as level-headed leadership.

In our democratic society, we deal with problems as they become clearly visible and visibly crucial to the majority of our citizens. In a society which insists that there are two sides to every

(more)

question, that majority view is often a long time coming. Child labor laws were late. So was the abolition of slavery. So were Social Security and Medicare. But, once a majority of Americans decided these were proper and necessary, that was the end of the argument.

So here we are, you and I, deeply and actively involved in politics at a time when Americans must make decisions on two great moral issues -- the war on poverty at home and the war against aggression abroad.

As in the past, there are two sides to these questions. And I ask you tonight to join me in making it clear which side we are on. I ask you to join in saying, again and again, that our cause is just and our course is right. Because, once Americans perceive a good and just cause, they do not turn their backs on it.

The same goes for all issues in a democracy, whether it is an issue being fought out here in Manteca or in the Capitol in Washington. We must not take it for granted that our neighbors know the urgency of the need for better schools and the protection of natural resources. Because the other side will be telling them not to worry; not to get involved; not to vote for bond issues or accept Federal aid for schools; that somehow things will turn out all right.

There is another side to the war in Viet Nam. We could withdraw. It would cost this generation nothing. It could cost the next generation everything.

We are at war in Viet Nam because, as long as totalitarian aggression is permitted, democratic government will not be. We are at war in Viet Nam because our national interest lies in a peaceful and prosperous Asia, just as it lay a decade ago in a stable Europe. And, if we do not make it clear in Viet Nam that aggression is a futile course, then we shall have to make it clear at another time and another place. And the next time it may very well be closer to home.

We are at war in Viet Nam because we must have a world in which talk and not terror is the accepted way to settle international disputes.

Make no mistake. The war in Viet Nam is a major struggle with major consequences for us and for Americans for decades to come.

(more)

Yet we have been able to sustain not only the war but the growth at home which we must have to achieve the Great Society.

We have grown in education. Even the most conservative American will agree that education is the basic ingredient for a decent life in our time. Of course, they don't all agree that everyone is entitled to a good education. Nearly three-quarters of the Republicans in the House voted against the President's historic education bill two years ago. And ninety-five percent of them tried to send his higher-education bill back to committee.

But they could not block it. As a result, federal investment in education has increased under President Johnson's leadership by 300 percent a year. This money has gone into slum schools and farm areas where 15-million youngsters were being denied a decent education solely because they came from poor homes. It has gone into scholarships and loans for the 100,000 bright youngsters who graduate from high school every year and cannot afford to go to college. It has been invested in colleges that couldn't afford to train enough doctors to keep up with the growing populations of their states. It has gone into a GI bill for veterans of the cold war and into new libraries and loans for vocational education.

That is how the Democratic Party has met the challenge of the dropout. While the opposition complains that help from the Federal Government makes a man lose his nerve or even his birthright, we are making an investment that will bring dignity to millions of poor Americans and a wealth of wasted talent into the mainstream of society.

Two years ago, more than half of this nation's elderly people had no insurance to cover them against sickness that was both inevitable and that was certain to wipe out not only their own savings but those of their children.

Today, they are covered by Medicare. They don't have to take a pauper's oath to get into a hospital. They are treated with dignity and by their own doctors.

For years, conservatives have made crime a political issue while they fought the tax increases that their own cities and states needed to deal with crime. Well, this Administration does more than talk about crime. It works to control it. President Johnson's National Crime Commission has proposed a "national strategy" for fighting

(more)

crime in this country with a \$350 million program to bolster law enforcement in the cities and states. That program is now before the Congress and I predict that it will shortly be one more part of the record of reform and improvement that is the mark of President Johnson's leadership.

The list of accomplishments is too long to cover in detail tonight. It includes rebuilding slums, reviving human rights; it is found in the first national program to control highway deaths and the first national effort to guarantee clear air and pure water.

And, perhaps above all, it includes the kind of government policies that have raised employment, cut unemployment, lifted farm income by nearly one-quarter, and given the United States a period of prosperity unequalled in history.

We are now entering the 81st consecutive month of economic growth in the United States.

In those months, our gain -- our gain alone -- has been equal to four-fifths of the entire national product of the Soviet Union last year.

Our gain -- our gain alone -- has been about as much as the combined national product of the United Kingdom and France in 1966.

In those months, wages, salaries and other compensation paid to workers and executives grew by 60 percent or about \$178 billion. Corporate profits rose 91 percent after taxes and 75 percent before taxes. And employment rose by an amount equal to the total labor force in New York and Chicago.

The advance in the economy and in new social programs during this unbroken climb in America's prosperity have rescued ten-million Americans from poverty. They have reduced the rates of infant mortality and maternal mortality, raised school enrollment and school completion rates. They have allowed millions more to attend college. And they have meant a lot of things that can't be measured in statistics -- dignity, pride and hope.

And so I ask you tonight, you who shared both the hard work and rewards of building that record, join President Johnson; join Congressman McFall; and join me in making it clear that we don't intend to quit while we're ahead.

Thank you.

###