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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION,  
ALAN S. BOYD, BEFORE THE BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD TRAINMEN  
CONFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CENTER FOR CONTINUING  
EDUCATION IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, ON THURSDAY APRIL 25, 8:00 P.M.  
1968

I have mixed feelings about whether I have come to the right place tonight. It is reassuring to see the number of people from the Department's staff in the audience - more in fact than I sometimes see in a month in Washington. On the other hand, I was told this was Charley Luna's meeting and yet other people are scheduled to do most of the talking.

It would take a book of major revelations to add much to the knowledge of a group as well-versed in transportation as this one and I bring no such book.

I am sure that most of you know we have spent our first year as a Department looking not so much for the right answers as for the right questions.

I think all of us knew when we started a year ago that we would be working on two levels - dealing as best we could with short-range problems while we assembled our forces to begin work on the long-range problems.



But I don't think any of us knew the first year would be so much like trying to put out a fire in a house we were still moving furniture into.

But between the fire and the furniture, we have managed to make progress. We have a fully operational Department. On many programs - highway safety for example - we are making real progress. The program is saving lives. Our research indicates it will save more lives as safeguards are expanded.

And some of our short-range difficulties have turned out to be more smoke than fire. Some of our actions have been interpreted as opening moves that would lead to raiding the highway trust fund or - as I heard just the other day - blocking downtown areas to automobiles. The need to make a five percent cut in highway spending to help bank inflation did nothing to dispel this apprehension, although I believe the highway bill we sent to Congress this week will help make it clear that our intentions are honorable.

Unfortunately, some of our short-range problems have turned out to be more long-range than we expected them to be - the high-speed passenger trains, for example. And I think the trains are symptomatic of something that can cause us difficulty as a nation not only in transportation but in other fields.

Many of us here tonight grew up on Buck Rogers and may still have trouble understanding what is holding up development of such a simple device as the anti-gravity belt. Later generations are growing up on even worse - time tunnels; space ships that will get you to another galaxy in nothing more than a T-shirt; close-ups of the face of the moon.

I think all of these have conspired to create a mood of rising expectations in this country not unlike the mood in some newly-independent countries. There, the mood is political. Here it is technological. But the difficulty that stems from this mood is essentially the same. It makes no allowance for the time that must elapse between the thought and the deed.

What may have looked like a relatively simple program to soup up an electric train so that it would run 60 miles an hour faster than most trains is in fact a venture into a



a new level of rail technology. You cannot change one element of a system - in this case the speed - without changing others. The entire system must change to one degree or another. All of us involved in the high-speed train program contributed to the mood of rising expectations by being too optimistic in our estimates of the time it would take to work out these engineering problems. Nor can we say any more at this time than that we know that - one by one - they are relatively simple and that they can be solved. We can say, also, that we are determined to solve them because we believe high-speed passenger service has an important role in the kind of transportation system the United States needs.

In our first year, also, we have seen a growing awareness among people in the transportation industry that their trucks or trains or planes are but part of a larger system. But the barriers are still up in too many places.

Abraham Lincoln told the Congress in 1862 that "the dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew." Mr. Lincoln spoke to a larger problem than transportation. But his challenge applies as well in transportation as it does in race relations or in education or in any other area of a society that changes as fast as ours does.

Yet, there are still people in the transportation field who act as though dogma was a man's best friend.

A voice advocating rail transit for a city provokes a voice charging that an effort is being made to force people to abandon their automobiles. There is still a tendency to fix blame instead of trying to fix whatever ails the system and to shrug off shortcomings as the result of bad public policy.

I think we will get on with the job of giving shippers and travelers faster, better coordinated, smoother service if we keep it first in mind that transportation is a service. A locomotive or a jumbo-jet have no intrinsic value, except perhaps as kinetic art and even as art there are few galleries with space enough to buy one. The value of transportation lies in its ability to provide society with mobility for its people and its goods. The customer no more cares about our problems with regulation or capitalization than he cares why a grocery has run out of bread. What he cares about is service. And it is up to us to see to it that he gets his money's worth.



The Department of Transportation's mandate from President Johnson is to share in that job with industry by performing research; by coordinating the Federal government's own transportation activities; and by promoting programs we believe will lead to better service for all Americans.

None of our programs alone or even in combination will solve our transportation problems. But they will all contribute to a better system. We will show results, not with sweeping changes, but with what seem at first glance to be insignificant adjustments all through the system - from better synchronization of traffic lights in one town to elimination of a grade crossing in another.

We have, I believe, made clear our general policies in the briefs we have filed with the regulatory agencies. We supported the rent-a-train proposal and the application for helicopter service in the Washington-Baltimore area because we want to encourage innovation. We opposed an attempt to bring air taxis under economic regulation and we argued for greater freedom for trucks to use the Interstate Highway System because we want to encourage competition and more efficient use of the system.

We have tried to demonstrate that we do not intend to withdraw into a fortress Washington, bolt the door, draw the blinds and issue Draconian instructions for building a better transportation network. We will help with research, analysis, recommendations for sensible regulatory policies and with a portion of the total investment. We are also required to advise the government on which of its investments will bring the greatest benefits in transportation. But neither government nor industry can produce the final product by itself. And we intend to continue working closely with industry.

One contribution we can make is in providing a clearer picture of just how our present system operates. We are building a strong office of systems analysis in the Department. It is, in many ways, still an infant art, but it makes you face facts. It is common sense plugged into a computer. And its guiding principle is the same as that on which any good detective operates - assume nothing, challenge everything. It is a great destroyer of myth and folklore. And it gets you into the habit of measuring all of the consequences of an action instead of just the good consequences. It forces you to explain in detail why you are in business, not just what your business is.



Systems analysis has also turned up some broad gaps in what we know about the transportation network we are trying to improve. For example, we have a report that tells us that if we build a highway through a corner of a primitive area in the west it will cut the population of bighorn sheep from 10 to 2. We have no such precise information about where the nation's railroad cars are at any given time and how productively they are used. I think one of the most important missions of the Department must be to help industry fill in this and other information gaps so that we have a clear idea of what impedes a more orderly flow of goods in the system.

We also intend to continue to concentrate on research in all fields - in high-speed ground transportation; in aids to navigation; in automobile and highway safety.

There is some urgency about this. If the demand for transportation continues to expand at its present rate, we must double the capacity of the system in the next 13 years. It is a job of such dimensions that, to my knowledge, nobody has even estimated the cost, much less worked out a plan for achieving it.

And while the increased demand puts pressure on all of us to produce better methods for moving people and cargo, it may well be a blessing for everyone involved in transportation.

For one thing, it provides an immediate opportunity to improve the system. As we expand what is already in place, we will pay closer attention to access roads for airports; to consolidating terminals so that you are not deposited by a train several miles from the bus you must board for the next stage of the trip.

The expansion should bring a new spirit of cooperation among the modes. With any luck at all, each mode will have its hands full just trying to keep up with new demand. There will be no time for scheming to impede the growth of other modes or trying to coax away work that can be done more efficiently by other carriers.

Finally, it gives us an opportunity to apply the lessons we have learned from the past about the hidden costs of inadequate planning in the system.

We have the best transportation network in the world. But we pay two prices for its service - one in cash and the other in noise, polluted air, accidents and delays. We have learned that transportation can change the environment. We



did not even have to plan for it - it just happened. I am persuaded that we can change the environment just as easily by planning for it - only this time we can produce more desirable changes.

We are a country that does not know its own strength. We have the knowledge and the material resources to achieve more than most of us really understand.

President Johnson raised the question in his State of the Union message. "We ask now," he said, "not how can we achieve abundance, but how shall we use our abundance."

I think the answer is in improving the quality of life for our people - in better health, better housing, better job opportunity, better education, better transportation. It lies in clearing the air, cleaning the water and making the country as pleasant as it is prosperous.

The President also raised the obvious next question.

The issue, he said, is not whether we can do these things, but whether we will.

I believe, as he does, that we will.

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