

FHWA - Mr. Kelly

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
ALAN S. BOYD, BEFORE THE ANNUAL WASHINGTON DINNER OF THE EMPIRE  
STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AT THE SHERATON-PARK HOTEL, IN WASH-  
INGTON, D.C., 6:30 P.M. MONDAY, APRIL 29, 1968

For us, the word problem covers a lot of ground.

An empty gas tank can be an overwhelming transportation  
problem.

So can an airport that is so crowded that a man can lose  
his luggage, his temper and his bearings without ever leaving  
the ground.

And, of course, we have the same splendid variety when  
we talk of solutions.

The final payment on the family car is a solution to one  
transportation problem.

For some people, an apartment in the same building where  
they work and shop is a solution.

So is a funicular railway, although you would look about as foolish traveling in New York with one as you would in parts of the Alps without one.

What we tend to call the American transportation problem is a series of problems.

And the system that solves the problems must be a series of systems, all of them coordinated to smooth the flow of commerce from ship to train to truck to store shelf, to smooth the way for the traveler from home to office or resort.

Obviously, no single vehicle will give us the proper system of transportation we seek and need.

A true system will contain automobiles, vertical takeoff airplanes, high-speed trains, pipelines and all of the other familiar forms of transportation as well as some that are still on the drawing boards.

In such a system, each vehicle will perform the work it does better than any other.

And it is in determining the proper combination of vehicles that we will face the real test of the Department's ability to achieve its mission.

It is already apparent that much of our research will be directed not toward finding solutions but to finding the real causes of the problems.

And I suspect that in the end we will find that we do not need to shake up our technology so much as we need to shake up the way we think about transportation.

We need, for example, to overcome antagonisms among the various modes - a job that may well require a department of its own.

We need to face the fact that, as we do not send dentists into court or send lawyers to fill teeth, neither should we send aircraft to do the work of trains, cars to do the work of buses or buses to do the work of rail transit.

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We need, also, to face the fact that the total transportation investment can no longer go entirely to developing higher speeds, bigger loads and larger profits.

From now on, a large share of the investment or of the profit in transportation must be spent reducing air pollution and ear pollution and the other side-effects of transportation which give us what might be called a social motion-sickness.

It will require, finally, facing the fact that the United States can no longer afford inefficiency, waste or death and injury on the scale now associated with transportation.

Given this nation's unfulfilled needs in education, pollution control, crime control, the war on poverty and other areas, there is a limit to the amount of money available for transportation.

We must be certain in the future that we get the greatest efficiency and safety at the lowest feasible cost.

And to do that we must be certain that our research takes nothing for granted; that we examine every proposal for its possible utility in putting together a transportation system.

We have invested hundreds of billions of dollars in a transportation network which is used by 200-million of the most motion-minded people in the world.

Even though the Interstate system does not meet every city's needs; even though some airports are too close to cities and others too far away; even though it is not always easy to make ends meet when you are transferring from one mode to another; that is what we have and what we must work with.

In a free society, none of the changes that are required can be made by fiat, without the consent of investors, travelers and shippers. We could long since have solved the shortage of school buildings in this country with year-round classes and double-sessions.

We could do the same with our transportation facilities if we were to stagger working hours and avoid rush-hour strains on highways and transit systems.

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But while that might qualify as a theoretical solution for a system analyst, it is not the sort of answer on which we can pin any hopes.

We must and will concentrate our efforts on solutions that seem to be within our reach.

The high-speed train, which the Budd Company is building and which the Penn Central will operate, is more than an effort to build a better passenger car.

It is also an effort to discover whether people will use it.

We think they will.

But we think, also, that it must be more than a novelty to be ridden once and written home about and then abandoned.

It must meet a need for travelers who are free to make a choice among several forms of transportation and who will make their choice on the basis of reliability, comfort, length of trip and courtesy of service.

It must, in short, be competitive.

Americans began to desert the train for the automobile more than 40 years ago, before there were four-lane divided highways and mass-produced V-8 engines, and even before the quality of passenger service began to decline.

There are as many explanations for the decline in railroad passenger travel as there are arguments over whether the decline can be stopped.

I do not intend to go into those today.

But I do believe that there are some new factors involved today, particularly for intermediate distances like the run from Washington to New York and from New York to Boston.

For one thing, weather and congestion now often stretch the time for a trip by airplane beyond what the timetable shows - particularly during peak hours.

And the pressure on airports should increase as populations rise, as we get closer to 1977, when one million people will board a commercial airliner in this country every day.

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Sometime next year we will begin to learn whether rail passenger service can carry some greater share of this increased traffic.

The improved service from New York to Washington will center around 50 new Budd cars, capable of top speeds of 160 miles an hour.

These cars will not be able to run at these speeds in regular service at first.

Speeds will be achieved, however, which will permit station to station time between New York and Washington of less than 3 hours.

Because this is, in essence, a market study, the service aboard the cars will vary so that we can get a reaction from the traveling public about the kind of service it wants.

The rules on smoking will be changed from time to time to see what situation is most popular.

The Penn Central has already started training or re-training some 4,000 employees in the techniques of putting a better foot forward - a sort of charm school.

There will be major promotional campaigns, face-lifting of the terminal in Washington, better systems for baggage handling.

In short, we are doing everything possible to make this new service attractive.

As I have said before, everything I have seen about this train leads me to believe this will be a better ride than you could get in the finest days of the fabled Twentieth Century and Overland Limiteds.

Recently, there have been several reports of problems with the Metroliner.

It is now apparent that we are involved in a venture onto a new level of rail technology.

We are supposed to be developing a new service, offering something as different from present passenger service as the jet is from the DC-3.

The fact that we are having to stay up late some nights to get it going is a good sign that we are doing the job we are supposed to be doing.

As a matter of fact, I would be more worried if the project were moving ahead without a hitch.

That would mean that everyone involved was doing something easy and familiar.

The propulsion system, the braking system, the car itself, all represent innovations in railroading.

Even more innovative is the turbo-liner which United Aircraft has on the test track.

We are as anxious to get this show on the road as are the people who have been writing and phoning the Penn Central to let them know they are ready to go whenever we are.

It turns out passenger trains have a lot of old friends and they aren't all in the Department of Transportation.

I have concentrated on the high-speed train tonight because it is close to home and because it gives you a good idea of the challenge that we face in trying to give the United States the kind of transportation system President Johnson had in mind when he created our Department.

The high-speed train is just one of many projects that must be designed, developed and tested for each phase of transportation in this country.

But when it is in operation, it will move us one step closer to achieving what has become the unofficial goal of the Department - the day when nobody, anywhere in the United States will have to ask what time the 9 o'clock leaves.

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