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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, BEFORE THE AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION AT THE CONVENTION BALLROOM OF THE STARDUST HOTEL IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1968, AT 4:00 PM.

I am delighted to be here in Las Vegas - where a shortage of "box-cars" is a problem I don't have to worry about.

And I'm particularly glad to meet with a group that doesn't think a wheel is something you lose your roll on.

We have, in our different ways, a great deal in common: we both spend a great deal of our time concerned with the care and feeding of the automobile.

You try to keep them running. And I try to keep them from running into each other - and from running us out of our urban areas.

Some one once calculated that - allowing for the vagaries of statistical reporting and the basis used - America has some 506,446 miles of urban streets and highways. The number of vehicles in urban areas is roughly 77 million (or about 80 percent of the total). That adds up to about 152 vehicles per mile. If you allow an average of ten feet per vehicle, this means we are almost one third of the way toward the possibility of solid bumper-to-bumper traffic on all our urban streets.

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That may seem far-fetched at first, but only last November the Oklahoma Highway Patrol reported a 119-car pileup on Interstate 40 near Oklahoma City. We may be a lot closer than we think to that bumper-to-bumper day when a driver in San Diego jams on his brakes and starts a chain reaction which eventually smashes the grill of a car in Portland, Maine.

But I think we have some grounds both for consolation and for optimism.

Consolation in the sense that we aren't alone with this problem. Not long ago, a national newspaper ran a story describing how officials in Soviet cities were becoming deeply concerned about the prospective impact of "hundreds of thousands of automobiles on the country's inadequate streets and highways, repair garages, gasoline stations and parking facilities."

Optimism in the sense that both industry and government have begun to face up to the critical transportation problems of our urban areas - and to take steps to meet them.

Of one thing I am certain: for the foreseeable future, we are going to have to learn to live with a growing number of automobiles. That means we are going to have to make far better use of our urban streets and highways.

This does not mean we shouldn't do everything we can to encourage the development of genuine alternatives to the automobile. On the contrary, I think we must develop those alternatives as a matter of the utmost urgency - but no one should be under the illusion that they will be anything but alternatives.

It does mean that we cannot simply turn our backs on the problems we have today and plan, instead, for that mythical day when the American public decides the car is just too much and transfers his allegiance - and his affections - to rail transit, helicopters, electric sidewalks, passenger capsules in pneumatic tubes and what have you.

Any effort to cope with the transportation problems in urban areas must start with one fundamental fact of life: the overwhelming desire of the American citizen to own and use a car.

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The Bureau of Public Roads estimates conservatively that there will be 156-million automobiles in this country in a little over 20 years. That is twice as many as we have now, but other estimates run much higher. If, for example, we continue to buy automobiles at the rate we have bought them since 1930, we will have nearly 200-million by 1990 and could have 350-million by the year 2000. Unless we stop buying cars tomorrow, we are going to need new highways. We will need them, **in fact, even if we never manufacture another car.** There is no question of need.

The only questions are: how many miles and lanes of surface and where. And what they ought to look like. And what's the best way to use them.

There isn't, for example, any question but that our cities have a lot more capacity than the crunch that occurs every rush hour might lead us to believe.

And we are actively testing ways to better use the streets and highways we already have - ways that include off-street parking, special lanes for buses, off-street loading for trucks, so-called reversible streets (which run all one way in the morning and all the other way at night), radar-controlled signals on freeway entry and exit ramps, overpasses in city streets to eliminate intersection tie-ups, and so on.

We are also, as you know, supporting demonstration projects to test the feasibility of new high-speed ground transportation - and seeking, in every way we know how, to explore and uncover new ways of improving the public transportation alternatives now available in our cities. We are even looking at the possibilities of free public transportation - trying to find out just what the various costs and benefits are, and where it might be workable and where not.

Beyond this, I think we are going to have to understand that transportation must be carefully built into the basic design of the city, just as an elevator is part of the very blueprint of a building. It is a rare architect who designs a building and then tells the contractor to nail on some elevators as best he can. Yet that is precisely how we go about expanding and rebuilding our cities and suburbs. Sometimes, we reverse the procedure. We design great elevators and nail buildings around them. We go blithely along tearing down old buildings and putting new ones in their place with double the floor space of the old; yet with no provision made to double the capacity of the transportation system which must get people to and from the new building.

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We are going to have to understand that cities are for people, and so are highways and automobiles. And we have reached the point, in most of our major cities, where we can tolerate more freeways and automobiles only to the extent that they are fully integrated into the overall transportation system of the city as well as its overall pattern of life.

This is why, in Baltimore and Chicago, the Department of Transportation is underwriting a new effort to integrate freeway design with the development plans of those cities - an effort that involves architects, city planners, economists, sociologists, as well as highway engineers.

In all these efforts to improve our transportation system - and to make it better serve the total needs of our society - there is, of course, no more urgent or important concern than safety - safety in all modes of transportation, but particularly in motor vehicle transportation.

I think one of the more gratifying aspects of these first months of the Department has been the degree of cooperation and assistance which we have received from the states in the implementation of our highway safety program and from industry in the implementation of our auto safety program. I don't believe I need to reiterate here how significant both these programs are in terms of what is perhaps our most important goal - the prevention of death and serious injury.

All of us on occasion, I am sure, wish that we could move faster; that we could achieve the goals of our programs quicker. At the same time, in assessing where we are today, I think we have to be realistic.

I am pleased with the progress we have made in the automobile safety standards. Our first standards were issued last January affecting such things as braking, safety belts, energy absorbing steering columns, crash padding and so on. This was followed up with our proposal of some 47 new standards which will affect 1969 and subsequent model year automobiles. These standards place new emphasis on the improvement of safety as it relates to brakes, tires, lights, windshields, child and occupant protection, and other items.

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We, also, have issued standards for insuring adequate safety reliability in automobile tires. The auto standards that we have issued and those we have under consideration by no means represent the ultimate in safety reliability that we all are striving for and expect to achieve someday. However, our best efforts now are to continue to work hard and consistently to bring about motor vehicle safety improvements as fast as possible. I am convinced in my own mind that the safety features the auto manufacturers have incorporated into their new models and those incorporated in anticipation of new standards, already are saving many, many lives.

And we have in the works, as you know, standards affecting used automobiles - standards which will be issued in the near future.

I believe we are already beginning to see the results of these efforts.

Last year, we came very close to recording the first absolute drop in traffic fatalities in many years. The number of traffic deaths in 1967 - 53,000, according to recent figures of the National Safety Council - equalled that of 1966. Because vehicle-miles of travel grew last year, the death rate did fall somewhat.

So we are making progress - and the efforts of government, of industry, of private safety campaigns, of all who have worked for safer driving, are beginning to bear fruit.

But progress does not mean we can now let down. This is not like a football game with a tidy beginning and end. It is a problem we may never completely resolve - a game we play forever in sudden death overtime.

And a game in which nobody simply sits on the sidelines - nobody is simply a spectator.

In our safety efforts - as in all our efforts - we in the Department of Transportation have tried to work closely with transportation industry and unions, with our states and localities. For we are convinced that while the solution to our transportation problems will require some hard choices, that is not the same thing as choosing sides.

We can't solve our transportation problems by embracing one mode and eliminating or ignoring all others.

Nor can we solve them simply by letting everybody go his own way.

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These approaches have been tried, and they don't work.

So now we're trying to do the job together, and this is beginning to show results.

With your help, I know it will work.

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