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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ALAN S. BOYD BEFORE A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE WASHINGTON CHAPTER OF SIGMA DELTA CHI, PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY OF JOURNALISTS, AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, WASHINGTON, D.C., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1968, AT 12:30 P.M.

More than any other people, we Americans have a fondness for the future.

Every year at around this time that fondness becomes a veritable passion - in every field and in all forms, the ancient and occult art of prestidigitating becomes the all-absorbing interest and occupation of us all.

I can claim no immunity to this predilection for predicting - but I have learned to confine it to fields other than transportation.

Recently I ran across this comment of a seasoned Wall Street security analyst:

"I belong to a panel of research men...that makes forecasts on the general level of stock prices for an independent research group. It is astonishing how often we all forecast alike, and how often we are wrong."

Prophecies in the field of transportation aren't often so unanimous - but they're often wrong.

Your President, Jerry terHorst, has suggested I might talk to you about our transportation scene as I envision it in 10 or 15 years.

I can't, with any accuracy or assurance, outline that scene. But I have at least one very definite conviction: We will make the scene. And the scene will be what we make it. This is, I suppose, emphasizing the obvious - except for the fact that, in transportation as in other fields, the obvious is what we have often most ignored.

In choosing to stop ignoring transportation, we have run directly into the American fondness for the future. We find that most people assume the Department of Transportation was created after the problems of transportation were solved, not before. Too many people assume we have seen the future and that it runs on time.

The point, I think, is, that next to the human beings who inhabit this country, its transportation system is the most complicated thing about it. And its improvement will come, not from miracles or even from what you might call the glamour rolling stock, but from an almost infinite number of adjustments ranging from synchronized traffic signals to timetables that can be analyzed without a portable computer.

Recently the Commission on the Year 2000 - a group of experts in various fields sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences - published their first preliminary probings toward the year 2000. Throughout their discussions and papers run two recurring themes.

The first is that, technologically, our future will not be much different than it is today. Marshall McLuhan, it is true, has predicted that by the end of the century the wheel and the highway will be replaced by hovercraft. Whether this is anything more than the medium getting a garbled message remains to be seen.

The second is that, more and more, we are going to have to make decisions in common that in the past we made individually and privately. "More and more," as one Commission expert phrased it, "we are becoming a 'communal society' in which the public sector has a greater importance and in which the goods and services of the society - those affecting cities, education, medical care, and the environment - will increasingly have to be purchased jointly."

Each of us can buy his own suit of clothes, or his own car, without putting it to a vote. But how about our own share of clean air, and our own stretch of clear highway?

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These two themes seem to me deeply interrelated - and directly relevant to transportation. For, in transportation as in other fields, we are on the threshold of an age in which we can create just about any technology that we need. The problems we face, therefore, are not so much technological as they are social and political. They are problems of ends rather than problems of means.

In the past we have, in effect, let succeeding transportation technologies determine the shape of our transportation network - not to speak of the shape of our cities and, in a very real sense, of our lives. When the trains came along, we built tracks and rode trains everywhere we could - from coast to coast, from city to city, from home to job. Our homes followed the tracks out into what became known as the suburbs. Then came the automobile - and you know that story.

A distinguished anthropologist has termed the automobile "the greatest consumer of public and personal space yet created by man." Combine that with the fact that Americans are the greatest consumers of automobiles on earth and you can easily begin to crowd an entire continent.

I will astonish nobody if I announce that the automobile is here to stay, and there are more on the way.

That means we must build more and better highways into cities already overflowing with automobiles. There probably is a limit to the number of cars that will fit in our cities, although the debate over what that limit is often sounds like the ancient debate over the number of angels you could get on the head of a pin.

Whatever the limit, there is no single, simple answer. We cannot outlaw automobiles - or stop building highways and start pouring billions of dollars into mass transit facilities.

No one decision will serve for every city - because the transportation problems of, say, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia and Los Angeles are as different as the cities themselves.

Each city must find its own answer - and it must come in the form of a combination of transportation services suited to the unique needs of each area.

And the main job of the Department of Transportation is to help each urban area find the right combination.

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That means, above all, helping them look at their transportation networks as integrated systems that exert a powerful and pervasive influence upon the people and the place they are designed to serve.

Most of the distortions in our transportation complex today stem from our understandable, but unfortunate, failure to look at transportation as an organic whole.

Thus, we built airports without adequate access routes - highways to pour cars into cities without providing enough parking spaces to put them in after they arrive.

We scarcely gave a second's thought to what all this expanding transportation complex was doing to the way we lived, even to the air we breathed.

We did not think, as the highways beckoned us out into the suburbs - about what this would do to our central cities. In our exodus toward the suburbs, we have left our cities populated - by and large - with a few of the very rich and most of the very poor. Inadvertently, but effectively, we have left the poor stranded in our cities - without adequate jobs nearby and without economical transportation to take them to jobs in the suburbs. We have left our cities stranded with staggering problems in education, welfare, law enforcement and without a tax base large enough to cope with these problems. And, of course, the ultimate irony is that we expect the city to devote more and more of its valuable land and other resources to the care and feeding of the very automobiles that bring the commuter to work in the morning and back to the suburbs at night.

All this ought to suggest at least two essentials in any adequate approach toward coping with the transportation problems of our urban areas: First, these problems do not begin or end at the city limits, and we cannot successfully deal with them except on an areawide basis - except through the cooperative efforts of city and surrounding suburbs.

Second, every transportation decision - whether, for example, to build a highway or a rail system, and where - must be made in the context of the transportation system as a whole and of the needs of the metropolitan community as a whole.

Transportation is one of the great choice mechanisms of our society. In the past we have, in effect, exercised our choice without knowing it - buying automobiles and building highways without really being aware of many of the implications of these decisions.

We can no longer leave these decisions merely to the marketplace - or to the engineers. Our highway engineers have built - and will continue to build - highways that are the technical superiors of any in the world. And it is time that we stopped asking them to exercise our responsibilities as well as theirs - and then blaming them for doing so.

We have, as I have suggested, reached the point - in transportation as in other fields - where the choices we make in common will determine how much freedom each of us can exercise individually.

It is quite clear that as long as people buy automobiles - and Americans are buying them at a rate of eight million a year - we are going to have to build highways to accommodate them. Yet it is also clear that we are dangerously close to the point of diminishing returns in our use of the automobile - that now that almost everybody has his own auto, and many of us more than one, none of us can use it with the unadulterated pleasure and freedom we wanted it for in the first place. We are, alas, buying them more and enjoying them less.

We are going to have to face several hard facts. For one thing, the sheer growth of numbers of the automobile will eventually begin to limit the very freedom of movement which led us to buy so many in the first place. For another, we are going to have to provide efficient, effective and attractive mass transit facilities as a serious transportation alternative. I am not - let me emphasize - talking about mass transit <u>instead</u> of autos and highways; I am talking about mass transit <u>as well as</u> autos and highways, mass transit of a kind and quality that will offer people what they do not now have - a real choice.

Physically, therefore, the transportation system of tomorrow will not look very different from today's. But we can do a great deal to make it run much more smoothly.

There is new technology in the works - but to the extent that it will appreciably ease our difficulties rather than aggravate them (the jumbo jets, for example, will compound the ground congestion problem in and around our airports), we are going to have to get through the next few decades by improving what we already have and by using it better.

There is no question that our city streets have a lot more capacity than the crunch that occurs every rush hour might lead us to believe.

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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 convertible 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.

Ultimately, our success in these efforts - and the success of our urban areas in dealing with their transportation problems on a comprehensive basis - will determine whether the central city as we know it today will survive.

There are those who are convinced it can't and won't. There are those who think we ought to forget about our central cities - except in terms of a kind of holding operation - and concentrate upon building so-called "new towns."

I don't know for certain what the future holds. I do know that we have to start where we are and with what we've got. I do know that wherever we're headed we've got to get there from here.

Recently I ran across this instructive description of the city of the future:

"From the train of moving seats in the darkest building, a visitor looks down on a miniature landscape far away. . . and finally he beholds the city itself with its quarter-mile towers, huge glass, and soaring among them four-level, seven-lane directional highways on which you can surely choose your speed - 100, 200 miles-an-hour. The city has abundant functions: fresh air, fine green parkways, recreational centers, all results of plausible planning and design. No building's shadow will touch another. Parks will occupy one third of the city area."

I found this vision instructive because it is not - as one might imagine - what some city planner in the year 1968 thinks we can achieve in the year 2000.

This description dates back to the 1939 World's Fair. And it refers to the city of 1960.

The moral, I think, is not that we should dream less, but that we should do more.

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