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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION AT THE U. S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS, THE PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1968, 11:00 A. M.

My son graduated from college last week and for one brief moment I thought I had gotten my last letter saying things were going fine, send more money. Then I remembered that we are about to start administering the urban mass transportation program. So I will still be getting plenty of mail.

As a matter of principle, it will be very welcome mail. During the past year, the Department has been trying to get one basic point across: that Americans must look at their transportation for what it really is -- an integral and important part of the total structure of society -- the moving part, if you will.

We have been telling anyone who would listen that it makes no sense to lay out locations for factories and offices and apartment buildings and then go back and fill in the blank spaces with streets and expressways. Nor does it make sense to plan public transportation systems without blending them with highway networks and airports.

So we are glad to start practicing what we have been preaching -- a coordinated approach to all transportation facilities that serve metropolitan areas.

I suspect we will never be able to stop the argument among planners about whether a city should be planned around its transportation network or the transportation network planned around the city.

But the important thing is that they cannot argue without talking to each other and that will be an improvement. The important thing is that the architects and the economists will be together, along with the transit men and the highway engineers, the planners and the landscapers, the sociologists and the politicians. And they will all be looking at the same map and reading the same blueprints.

And that is important because, as transportation made the city possible, it can also make the city impossible. It not only moves people and goods, it can affect our health, our attitudes, our pattern of life, our physical and social environment, the very air we breathe.

It is as dangerous to generalize about America's cities as it is to generalize about people. The city is all things to all men -- centers of art and thought to some; traps for others; exciting places of opportunity for some and the end of the road for others. And the frames of reference are -- and should be -- as diverse as those of the artist and the Vermont farmer who was trying to sell him a house. "Does it have a view?" the artist wanted to know. "A good view is important to me." And the farmer said: "Well, from the front porch you can see Ed Snow's barn but there's not much beyond that except a bunch of mountains."

But there are some things about our cities on which all men can agree. The air is too often too polluted. The crime rate is too high, the streets are often beyond congestion and closer to saturation; too much of the housing is neither decent, nor safe nor sanitary; and in the slum areas it is not so much that the children fail in school as that the school fails the children.

And perhaps the most serious transportation problem the cities have ever dealt with is the availability of it -- transportation that made it possible for people to abandon the city. And as a result we have drained our cities of too much of the human and financial resources they need to stay alive.

We have, except for an atoll of affluence here and there, abandoned the cities by night to the poor and underprivileged. We have engineered good networks that make it possible for us to get to the city to earn the incomes that we take back with us to the suburbs. But we have engineered almost nothing in the way of transportation to take the poor to the jobs that have joined in the flight to the suburbs.

I have not come here today to tell you your troubles. Nor do I have any all-purpose plans for solving the urban problems in transportation or in any other field.

I do know that President Johnson is the first American president to see the problem of the cities in scale and to make it possible for us to begin to deal with the problems of the cities. As a result of his programs, there is now help available on a larger scale than ever before -- help in dealing with disease, poverty, ignorance and blight.

The model cities program provides federal help for improving not just housing but whole neighborhoods. Rent supplement program makes it possible for people to use them. City schools have more money available, and more creative programs on which to use the money -- programs like the Teacher Corps and others. And among these programs is our own Department of Transportation.

In his message to Congress calling for creation of the Department, the President pointed out that there is no true system of transportation in this country. There is, rather, a haphazard collection of systems that grew to meet needs as they arose but not always to meet each other. As a result, he said, "both people and goods are compelled to conform to the system as it is..." And he saw the Department's primary job as that of reversing that order to make the system conform to the needs of people.

In general, we are working toward coordinating the future growth of all modes of transportation so that people and cargo can move from one to another with a minimum of delay and a maximum of comfort and safety.

Our role in the cities is no different. A taxicab, a bus, an expressway serve the same purpose as a school, an art gallery or an office. They are there because people who work or live in cities need them to live well. Our job is to help make them work as well as possible.

A good place to start on this job, I think, is to recognize that in most American cities for the foreseeable future the dominant form of transportation will continue to be rubber over roads.

But the question is how much rubber over what kind of roads. We have reached a point where we can no longer ignore the fact that the price of allowing the automobile free rein in some cities -- at the expense of other values and means and considerations -- may well be higher than we want to pay. Arthur Palmer, the transportation administrator for New York City, put it this way recently: "The advantage of the motor vehicle," he said, "as a flexible and freely moving mode of transportation has been lost in its own uncontrolled and unprovided for abundance -- like a herd of protected elk reduced to starvation by its own proliferation on a limited range."

We have not yet reached the point where we are required to make an absolute choice between the automobile and the city.

Nor have we reached the point where we must choose between the automobile and public transportation. But we have reached the point -- at least in central business districts -- where we must face up to the fact that we do have a limited range. We must begin to temper our romance with the automobile with a strong dose of reality.

Reality, of course, also requires that we recognize the rather pathetic state and severe limitations of existing alternatives to the automobile. And we must recognize that the reason most Americans have too little choice is that neither at the public nor the private level have we spent anywhere near the time, money or imagination on public transportation as we have lavished on the car. In terms of Federal contributions we spend as much on highways every 25 days as we have spent in the nearly seven years since the Urban Mass Transportation Act was passed.

As I have suggested, the answer is not to forget about automobiles and highways and focus all of our energies and funds on alternatives. The answer, instead, is to begin to focus on transportation as a system,

made up of interdependent modes, whose job is to serve the city in which it operates and the people who live there.

The answer is to start dealing with transportation more in terms of the people it serves; to start shaping it to give them access to the opportunities that cities alone can supply.

And that means:

--First, that each urban area must decide for itself what kind of transportation system best serves and suits its particular needs. Obviously, the system that works best in Omaha or Denver is not likely to work at all in New York or Boston.

--Second, that we look at our various transportation modes as mutually inclusive rather than mutually exclusive. We have to stop thinking of alternatives in the sense of one mode or another and start thinking of alternatives in terms of varying combinations of modes.

--Third, that we evaluate alternative transportation systems, not in narrowly economic or engineering terms, but in terms of the total urban environment in which they operate and which they so deeply affect.

--Finally, that we accelerate the process by which the Councils of Governments and others have begun to move toward regional planning of comprehensive transportation systems.

My department is engaged in hundreds of programs and projects and investigations to help you approach your transportation problems in terms of your total needs. But we can do no more than help.

Each city and each metropolitan area must decide for itself what kind of transportation system best suits its needs. And before it can decide that, it must decide what kind of city it wants to be.

I realize that many of you are already putting in long, hard days just meeting payrolls and holding the city together without getting into such abstracts as the kind of city you want to be.

But I will pass on to you one of the more instructive things I have heard from mayors -- this from Mayor Erik Jonsson of Dallas. "People," he said, "tend to forget that there is a difference between a goal and a plan. A goal is where you want to go. A plan is how you get there."

I am aware, also, that overlapping and obsolete jurisdictions can frustrate the best of intentions -- as can federal policies which must bear some of the blame for creating your problems.

The Federal Government, for example, has at one and the same time established programs to rebuild and restore our central cities and programs that have contributed to their decay and decline.

But we are moving toward more comprehensive and better coordinated Federal-aid programs. And I think the transfer of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration to our Department is one sign of that. The transfer, in and of itself, will not solve your transportation problems. But it is a step toward reshaping Federal programs to respond more fully and more flexibly to the needs of your cities.

Currently, for example, our transportation demonstration programs are designed to deal mainly with individual pieces of hardware rather than with systems and to serve very broad rather than very particular needs. And they have a way sometimes of being applicable everywhere in general and nowhere in particular.

We may well want to consider a radical revision of our whole approach to demonstration grants -- a revision that would enable them to serve both more inclusive and more unique purposes, both more comprehensive and more concrete needs.

One approach would be to permit the cities -- backed with Federal funds and free from rigid program categorization -- to define and deal with their most urgent transportation problems as they see them, not as we see them.

Today, you are severely restricted in what you can do with Federal transportation aid. Billions of dollars are available to streets and expressways and they are available now. A few millions of dollars are available for mass transit and there is a waiting list. So you are really faced with the same choice the American commuter is faced with -- take the car now or wait for the train. Yet, freeways and mass transit are only two ways of dealing with just a few of the urban transportation needs.

A city may well decide, for example, that it requires, not new highways or mass transit, but more fringe parking, or better airport access, or a new computerized traffic control system, or more grade separations.

This year, we have asked the Congress to make available funds for fringe parking and for adjustments to city street systems. But they still would be categorized. And the approach I suggest might well be the next step -- making grants available to meet urban transportation problems in almost any way -- however novel -- that bears a rational relationship to a city's overall transportation planning. It would, as I envisage it, help cities meet their immediate needs as well as improve their comprehensive transportation system planning.

We look forward to working closely with all of you to make our programs more responsive to the real needs of your cities. We share your sense of urgency for meeting those needs -- in education, in employment, in renewal and in transportation.

We believe America's cities are one of its great resources, and we have no illusions that conserving them and improving them will be an easy job for any of us. It is fashionable these days to talk of the cities much as we talk about old automobiles, that ought to be traded in periodically for new models.

I prefer to think of them the way President Johnson did when he said: "We must seek, and we must find, the ways to perpetuate in the city the individual, the human dignity, the respect for human rights... that has been part of the American character and the strength of the American system."

This country has always risen to the challenge of the frontier. I suggest that the frontier today is the city. And President Johnson has said it best: "The challenge of changing the face of the city and the men who live there summons us all -- the President and the Congress, Governors and Mayors.

"The challenge reaches as well into every corporate board room, university, and union headquarters in America.

"It extends to church and community groups, and to the family itself. The problem is so vast that the answer can only be forged by responsible leadership from every sector, public and private.

"We dare not fail to answer -- loud and clear."

Our purpose is to join with you in providing answers.

Thank you.

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