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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, AT THE INAUGURATION OF METROLINER SERVICES AT THE SOUTH CONCOURSE, PENN CENTRAL STATION IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1969, 12:00 NOON

I want to congratulate and thank Penn Central for this fine reception and luncheon. I'm having a wonderful time.

I must add, however, that it has given me concern about some of our basic transportation policies. We have been assuming the function of transportation was to get the traveler aboard and to his destination as soon as possible. I wonder.. This seems like a better idea... a long stop.... the passengers get off and gather around for refreshments and talk and everybody has fun. Perhaps we're all in too much of a hurry.

I also want to congratulate Penn Central for the operation of the Metroliner. The ride was smooth--so smooth in fact, that at times I was suspicious. I remember an early train ride in Florida. We were bumping along. The car was shaking and rolling. Boxes were falling down from above and the passengers were banging into each other. This kept up for a few minutes and then gradually eased off. The man in the seat in front of me turned to a friend across the aisle and observed, "Things seem to be going smoother."

"Yes, we're off the track now."

Each of us will interpret for himself the significance of this beginning of improved passenger service between Washington and New York. For us in government, it has one main overriding significance.

The purpose behind our support for this Metroliner is to determine how we can most efficiently utilize government funds.

We shall be facing in the next few years here in this Northeast Corridor transportation problems of staggering proportions. The successful resolution of these problems is certain to require government assistance. This Metroliner will help us determine how we can best provide that aid. More directly, we want to find out first, if rail passenger service between Washington and New York can be made sufficiently attractive to lure back to the railroads lost patronage; secondly, we seek to know if that patronage is big enough to make that service profitable to the railroads.

For my part, I am optimistic on both of these points. And I find some basis for my optimism.

As in any major program, this Metroliner has been the subject of criticism and discussion. I have been impressed, however, that little of the argument concerns the wisdom of building this train. The advice of the press and the public has been a resounding "go!" The train is popular even before it begins service. If a measure of this popularity translates into ticket sales, its future will be a good one indeed.

Our second hope, that the railroads can provide this improved service and wind up in the black, remains to be proved. I, personally, feel that this hope will also prove justified. I do not, however, think success will be automatic. There is work to be done.

I have, for the past few years, been listening to many people--both in and out of the industry--tell me what the railroads need most. I think what we all need right now--sitting high in the cab and highballing down the mainline--is a Mr. Namath of railroading. Too many people have been passing on old cliches. None has ever stopped to ask himself whether or not they are true. I suspect that a couple of years from now, we shall all look back on our prejudices about train passenger service and in Mr. Namath's phrase say, "Never were so many so wrong."

Transportation is unique in several respects. It is different from other industries in that it tends to generate a tremendous amount of sentiment, emotion and romance. Ships at sea and huge locomotives speeding through the valley at night conjure up visions of distant places and the romance of travel. This somehow tends to translate into affection for the machines themselves. This is all well and good. Often, however, this romance of transportation tends to interfere. It tends to color the facts. I suggest we are all guilty of a tendency to look back at what we think of the golden days of railroading. I am not so sure those times 30 to 50 years ago were so golden to the people in them. Transportation has always had problems. I don't think it was ever easy to make a dollar. Travelers always complained and shippers were seldom satisfied. The first form letter--I am told--originated to handle passenger train complaints. One traveler, irate at finding a bedbug in his berth, wrote a strong letter to the offending railroad. A week or so later he was agreeably surprised to receive a very gracious letter from the president of the company himself apologizing for the situation and assuring him that the insect problem had been resolved. Unfortunately, however, somebody had mistakenly enclosed his original letter. There up in the corner was the handwritten notation, "Send this nut the bedbug letter."

I am not so sure there ever was a golden era. I do think, however, there can be one in the future. And that's where we need to look.

The Metroliner that begins service tomorrow represents substantial technological advance. It is capable of speeds up to 150 miles per hour. It will in service offer speedy downtown to downtown service. Its running time from downtown Washington to downtown New York of 2 hours and 59 minutes should make it very attractive during the morning and evening rush hours.

The train itself is appealing--modern, clean and bright. Passengers will also have more space. They can work in comfort and carry on telephone calls with their own office or clients outside. The space to move about will equal that of any common carrier service anywhere. And, finally, the price of a ticket offers savings when compared with air fares.

There is much about the Metroliner to lure customers. We hope they turn out in droves.

For the railroads, the promise is equally good.

Let's assume the Metroliner proves out--that this new modern high speed travel helps restore the railroads to their former eminence as popular common carriers of passengers. Here are some indications of the size of the market that can be tapped. Between 1960 and 1967, total intercity passenger

travel miles in the United States increased by a tremendous 30 percent. We expect it to increase at a greater rate in the next ten years--57 percent in the 1966-1975 time period. Our Bureau of Public Roads estimates that intercity highway travel in the Northeast Corridor by itself will double in the 20-year period of 1965-1985. The Bureau further estimates that to bring just the intercity portion of the corridor highway system up to snuff to meet this demand will require \$2 1/2 billion. This, however, proves to be only a small figure in comparison. Our projections indicate that to meet the expanding intercity and urban mass transportation demands of the corridor during the next 25 years will require expenditures of \$50 billion. The Northeast Corridor represents a huge transportation market.

Better than statistics, however, was a report sent to Congress by our high speed people last spring. It noted the High Speed Ground Transportation Act was passed in 1965 with a sense of urgency. That urgency derived from the realization that the demand for intercity transportation in our urbanized corridors was increasing faster than our capability for handling it. The 1968 report then noted that in the three-year period since the Act was passed, travel volume had increased at a greater rate than predicted. Then came this incredible line.. "The period of time before we shall completely run out of transportation capacity in the Northeast Corridor has, consequently, been shortened."

The market for this Metroliner service is, then, unlimited. I can tell you representatives of the railroad industry here today, "Make the Metroliner a success, and you can write your own ticket."

I note, finally, that my remarks here today make up one of my last official appearances as Secretary of Transportation. I want to use this occasion to emphasize to the railroad industry that there is a new appreciation of your problems--and also of your potential--among people in Washington today. This represents no downgrading of the other modes. It derives, rather, from the realization both that we shall in the future need every ounce of transportation we can find and that railroads can provide good transportation service. This Metroliner here today is the first evidence of government's new approach. I think it's a good sign and a good beginning. We did, after all--you, and our people in government--get the train back on the track. We leave it up to you now to make it a success.

Thank you.

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