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EXCERPTS OF REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE BEFORE THE INSTITUTE FOR BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS, WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1969 12:30 P.M.

It is an honor to speak to this group of distinguished Americans, and it is an honor to be here today to represent the President.

I bring you President Nixon's sincere regrets that he is unable to be with us this noon. I know, personally, that he wanted very much to be here to discuss with you some of the key issues of the Nation's domestic policy. I feel inadequate, in a sense, because I know that he could do a far better job than I in the matter of setting the record straight in several areas.

Before saying anything else, I would point out that I have known our President well for some 17 years. But it has not been until this year -- after seven and a half months in the Cabinet -- that I have really realized the dedication, the basic righteousness, and the honest sense of fairness that is part and parcel of the man who occupies the highest elective office in this land. So, it is not only an honor to work for him -- again, it is a proud pleasure to represent him here.

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I see a great many friends in the audience -- gentlemen I've worked with (and campaigned with) back in Massachusetts -- like the Honorable Ed Brooke, Tom Atkins, Gus Solomons, Rev. Michael Haynes, to name a few -- and also some good friends who I've met throughout the country and who have been over to my shop urging the Department of Transportation to join with them in solving some of their knottier urban transportation problems.

In fact, let me tell you about the time my good friend Carl Stokes dropped by my office a few months ago to discuss downtown transportation problems in Cleveland. I cleaned up my desk a little, straightened my necktie, and took my briefcase off the chair next to my desk.

Then my aide came in and suggested that we'd better have the meeting in my conference room next door. So I went in, and there was Mayor Stokes -- with half a dozen aids, a whole wall full of charts and diagrams, two reporters from Cleveland, and a photographer from the Associated Press! And a request for \$400 thousand.

Carl had a good solid presentation, his city had a real need, the Federal government was in a position to help and Cleveland got the cash!

As a matter of fact, I'll be in Cleveland next Wednesday and Carl has invited me to look at what the Mayor did with our money!

This is an oversimplification to be sure; but I think I've made the point. The Department of Transportation is extremely interested in working hand-in-glove with the states and the municipalities. We have the expertise in virtually every area of transportation. We are more than receptive to sound suggestions, and we are working hard to increase our financial resources so we can keep this Nation on the move.

It is the firm conviction of this administration -- and the President and I have discussed this many times -- that transportation is one of the major keys to many of our social ills ... both in heavily-populated urban areas, as well as in rural sections of the country.

To a mother with a small child trying to get to a health center, to a dropout who should go to a job training site, to an unemployed or under-employed father trying to get to work, to young people trying to get to institutions of higher learning, and even to children who want to go to the zoo -- fast, efficient, clean and reliable public transportation is absolutely essential. In all too many cases in America, the walls around our ghettos are walls that exist because of an inability to move freely and inexpensively.

In all too many instances, the man who is told that to get to work he'll have to get up at 5:30 wait in the rain, catch a bus, make three transfers, and spend a dollar and a quarter each way for the privilege, will roll over in bed and go back to sleep.

In all too many cases -- in our cities as well as in our smaller towns -- it's too close to the truth when someone says, "You can't get there from here."

I think all of us here today are in agreement that the answer to this problem is not "a car in every garage."

The answer is not further congestion of our highways and further pollution of our air. Indeed, even now we are producing automobiles faster than we are producing people!

Moreover, the average American spends some 13 percent of each work day breathing in the fumes of the car in front of him. No, more cars are not the answer.

It is to his great and enduring credit that President Nixon recognizes the dangers of relying solely upon one mode of transportation.

He knows that if we expect to make any headway with our urban problems of congestion, poverty, pollution and employment we are going to have to try something new in the way of urban transportation.

We will be compelled to invest many billions of dollars over the coming years if we are to provide the new and updated public transportation our people need to assure mobility.

And the cities and states alone cannot sustain this burden. State and local expenditures -- and I'm sure you are aware of this -- have increased nearly three times in the last ten years. Debts have risen at the same rate, and now exceed \$100 billion.

Without Federal help, public transportation would probably dry up in all but a few of the largest cities -- resulting in urban decay, civil disorder, and air pollution that any reasonable man would want to avoid at all costs.

To solve this problem before it becomes completely unmanageable, the President and I have proposed to Congress that this Nation invest \$10 billion in public transportation aid over a 12-year period. We seek authority to commit funds starting at \$300 million and rising to one billion dollars during the first five years, then continuing at one billion dollars a year through the end of the program.

Our Bill hinges on a financing device known as "Contract Authority" -- which will give cities and counties and other groups the assurance they need in order to sell bonds for long-range projects.

Also, let me point out that this Bill is not just a "big city" Bill. I know a great many of you are here from smaller cities, from rural counties, from state legislatures and even from small towns. This is legislation that can be used to revitalize a failing bus company out in the country as well as upgrade a ramshackle subway system in a huge metropolis.

It is legislation that can build new systems where there are none today -- it is legislation that will underwrite the research and development work that is necessary to bring about entirely new systems to give all Americans the mobility they demand and deserve.

One word of importance on this matter, however. We have limited funds. We have never spent enough on public transportation. In fact, we spend more on highways every six weeks than we have spent on public transportation in the past six years! This is an imbalance that must be corrected.

While we need highways -- while the interstate system has brought this whole Nation together as never before in history -- we need to give similar attention and priority to moving people over those equally-important short distances from home to school to job to church and so forth. It is essential that we expand our program for public transportation.

On the matter of highways -- let me cover just a few points briefly, as most of you are municipal officials and highway building is largely a Federal-State affair. In black neighborhoods -- indeed in all neighborhoods -- dislocation and relocation because of highways can cause a lot of problems.

We are working on those problems. It is the policy of this administration and the policy of this department that every effort will always be made, in each individual case, to assure that the building of highways will result in the least possible disruption of our human and natural resources and our established neighborhood patterns.

I think that one of the most significant things we have done at the Department of Transportation in these few short months is to create the Office of Assistant Secretary for Environment and Urban Systems. Filling this important post is the former Mayor of the City of Seattle, J. D. Braman. He's a good man, a dedicated man, and already -- such as in the New Orleans Riverfront Expressway controversy -- he has acted as the "conscience" of this Administration and has made sure that the things we do are done in concert with our city structure and our environment.

One further point concerning the challenges of the future -- and that involves the most "futuristic" of our transportation modes, aviation.

We are fast approaching saturation on our airports and airways. The tragic news from Indianapolis on Tuesday only added emphasis to the crisis that exists.

We have asked Congress to enact an Airport/Airways bill that will affect virtually every person in the country. Even those who never fly. This bill will provide a total of 7 and a half billion dollars for airport improvement, and for vastly improved navigation aids to control the 14-thousand airplane flights per day in the United States, a figure that is expected to triple in the next decade.

The legislation calls for a user charge on those who fly. This is an identifiable source of funds, and we feel that it is fitting and proper that the users pick up the tab for the needed improvements.

Beyond these matters, the Department of Transportation is deeply involved in a number of other areas. Highway safety. High speed ground transportation. Railroad safety. Aids to navigation, through the Coast Guard. Pipeline safety. The shipment of hazardous materials.

There is another aspect of my Department that I would like to mention. Back in January I learned that transportation ranked right down near the bottom in terms of percentage of minority group employees on the payroll.

And when it came to the so-called "super-grades" -- or high paid, top level, policy-making officials -- D-O-T didn't have one. Well, we changed that in a hurry. We now have a total of 14 minority group supergrades -- all top caliber people, by the way -- and we are making steady improvement in our overall minority group employment picture. In fact, the General Counsel to our Department is the Honorable James A. Washington, former Dean of the Howard University Law School. He's a top-notch lawyer, and I'm delighted to have him on my management team.

You are probably aware of the changes we made in the equal employment clauses of our contracts with companies that build Federally-financed highways. We tightened the equal opportunity requirements, setting strict and explicit guidelines for contractors to follow if they want to do business with the Federal Highway Administration.

I called all my top Administrators and Assistant Secretaries on the carpet last spring at a Department-wide Equal Opportunity Conference (at which Clarence Mitchell was the keynote speaker), and we will have another similar conference this fall and these people are going to show me the results of what they've done. I've called for results, and they know I mean business.

What we have done at D-O-T, and what we shall continue to do, is only an expression of what the entire Nixon Administration wants to do, is doing and will continue to do.

This is an Administration of change. There are too many ills in this country today, and we intend to cure them. Not overnight. But quickly, nonetheless.

In welfare for instance we must do well for those in need, for we are a people who care. We must do even better for those in need of opportunity, for we are a people who know the road to self-respect and the value of character.

The more people can say farewell to Welfare, the more this Administration can do for the welfare of every American.

Our country has been saddled with a Welfare system today that breaks up families, making it more profitable for a man to leave home and put his family on Welfare than to stay home and seek work. This system has seen 3-million more people join the Welfare rolls in the past eight years, and during a period of relatively high employment, I might add.

This system has been grossly unfair, for in one State a dependent child might receive \$263 a month, and in another State receive only \$39 each month. This has helped draw millions into our already overcrowded inner cities, to lead unfruitful lives of frustration and to be tempted by crime.

Unfortunately, our Welfare system has penalized the poor man who works, encourages idleness and permits many of the helpless to go without the basic necessities of life.

The President's new domestic program will build a foundation under the income of every American family with dependent children that cannot care for itself -- wherever in America that family might live. Its benefits will go to the working poor, as well as the non-working poor; to families with dependent children headed by a father as well as those headed by a mother.

For all who are able to work, but who are held down, tied down or beaten down, the manpower training portion of the new program will offer equal opportunity to learn to work, equal opportunity to find work, and an equal requirement to make themselves available for work or work training.

The important thing about any manpower program is not what it might provide an employer or a Nation, but what it might provide the man who is helped. President Nixon's proposals are directed toward seeing that men get a better opportunity to work, but also that they get an opportunity to get better work.

The President knows that unemployment is a problem that goes beyond economics. When a man is unemployed, it is not only his hands which are idle, but his hopes; it is not only his wallet that must be filled, but his dreams that must be fulfilled.

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