



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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EXCERPTS OF REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE AT THE DEDICATION OF FAA CENTER, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 1969, 9:30 A. M.

When I talked with the members of the NORTH Commission in April, I heard a lot of good things about Alaska. Now I can see and breathe them for myself. I took one deep breath of that clean Anchorage air this morning and I can tell you I don't want to breathe out!

This new air traffic control center we are dedicating this morning has the best physical plant in the entire airways system. I have been all over this State in the past three days and I can see that such a facility is coming on-line just in time. It is situated in the heart of a region of rapidly expanding passenger and air freight business. The true synonym for Anchorage -- and for Alaska -- today is progress.

I am really impressed with the vitality of this State. You have taken giant strides over the last decade. You emerged from territorial status ten years ago in the Administration of our late, beloved President Eisenhower, and since then your population has almost doubled and your industries have grown at a rapid pace. Your expanding educational system is a tribute to the high value Alaskans place on learning. The University of Alaska is a

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center for Arctic research. This State is a growing tourist attraction with enormous potential as a vacation spot. Alaska makes a vital contribution to the National defense. And Alaska is certainly a leader in its attitude toward conservation. I think this State is in a very good position to teach the others a lesson in how to make industrial progress and save the environment at the same time.

All America is proud of the spirit and civic drive this State showed after the devastation of the great earthquake of 1964. Without swift and reliable air service this State could not have recovered so quickly. And I want to acknowledge right now the vital part played by the Federal Aviation Administration during the ensuing five years in helping Alaska reach its present level. When you have one plane for every one hundred people and one of every fifty people is a pilot, maintenance of an airways system takes on the significance of highways in the lower forty-eight.

Without the remarkable skill and the even more remarkable dedication of FAA employees here, the electronic and mechanical tools would be worthless. There is no more devoted or generous group of public servants anywhere in America. Your willingness to go the second mile and your efforts to provide opportunity for native Alaskans are most commendable. Your esprit de corps would do credit to the astronauts themselves. I salute you and I salute your vital work and many personal sacrifices for our civil and military aviation.

As a matter of fact you FAA employees have done so well in encouraging air traffic that you have outgrown your previous facilities. The equipment housed in this building will make air transportation in Alaska much safer, more dependable and efficient. By 1971 you will be combining all air traffic operations from Fairbanks and Anchorage into one smooth operation.

You will be able to provide altitude and distance separation for all aircraft in Alaska operating on instrument flight rules.

In combination with your expanded program of services to airmen in remote areas -- such as the North Slope -- this facility will take many of the hazards out of aviation here in a State where aviation is so important.

Just yesterday I had the opportunity to see first hand everything that's going on up around Prudhoe Bay, and believe me, it's most impressive.

And I think it's appropriate to mention at this time, that we are seeing a fine example of cooperation between government and private industry up there.

After numerous meetings between Lyle Brown, FAA Regional Director, and representatives of the oil companies, agreement for the installation of better communications and navigational aids to air carriers has been arrived at.

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Without going into lengthy details, the agreement is this:

The Federal Government is furnishing the necessary hardware out of inventory -- and the Air Force is transporting it to the site. Industry's part of the agreement is to finance the FAA's construction engineering costs and the installation of the equipment. The oil companies are also providing the sites, and constructing the necessary buildings, utilities and roads to Federal standards.

To me, such cooperation is outstanding, and serves the National interest as well as Alaska's interest.

I am informed that this agreement is substantially complete, and that the next time I fly into Prudhoe Bay, we can practically make an I-F-R approach!

Yes, aviation is the big transportation story in Alaska. You rank above all other States except California and Texas in the number of airfields and landing strips. You have more pilots per capita. You have here in Alaska a remarkable total, considering the population, of seventy-nine flight service facilities -- with thirteen more to come. I am sure all Alaskan children take planes for granted and many of them fly before they ever take a ride in a car.

Now this State is not normally so saturated that collision avoidance is a problem. But the demand for commercial air service in the Nation as a whole has been growing at a rate of twenty percent per annum for many years now. It doubled just since 1964 from eighty-two million passengers to 150-million in 1968. We'll reach 170-million in 1970, and by 1979, the number of passengers will rise by an explosive three hundred percent.

To meet this demand we have proposed to Congress that we invest five billion dollars over the next ten years to upgrade instrument landing systems, air traffic control facilities, and airports. It's just a matter of "pay as you grow." And we have proposed a system of modest user taxes to pay for these improvements -- taxes that are well within the capacity of users to pay.

Unless we make investments on such a scale, we will be faced with chaos as air traffic backs up and shuts down all over the country. This so-called "pipeline" effect could threaten even this progressive city.

Anchorage, after all, is now a rapidly growing international airport. This part of the world is no longer a legendary ice box. It is at the cross-roads of polar flights from Western Europe to the Orient, which will increase dramatically throughout the foreseeable future.

You will have no shortages of opportunity for service and for professional advancement in the years ahead. You are a vital part of a great enterprise of government serving the world's most progressive air economy. Your dedication is commendable and your many extra services are

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appreciated. You can be proud of the FAA and its vital role in Alaska. And I believe also that the existence of this new facility will stand as evidence of our commitment to your future, and to the future of this great State.

Let me conclude by saying that it's a real pleasure to be here with you today for this dedication ceremony. As I have said on many occasions in the past three or four days, Alaskas are a special "breed of cat." You're my kind of people people who like to go out and get things done.

Keep up the good work, and I hope to get the chance to visit with you often.

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