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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE, AT A DINNER COMMEMORATING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAINT LAWRENCE SEAWAY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND GREAT LAKES TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, MONDAY, JULY 7, 1969, COBO HALL, DETROIT, MICHIGAN.

Let me say at the outset what a pleasure it is to be back here in the Eastern Standard Time Zone.

I was here in your city one evening a couple of weeks ago, and I'll tell you what I told that audience -- when you invite a Washington official to come to dinner in Detroit, what with jet airplanes and the one-hour time difference, he has the pleasure of driving through rush-hour traffic in both cities!

I am glad to be here. It is not only a pleasure, it is a privilege to be with you in this Gateway city that is located so prominently in the middle of America's "Fourth Seacoast."

As Secretary of Transportation, I feel very much at home when I'm in a building that is just a stone's throw from our fabulous Great Lakes Waterway with oceangoing ships just outside the door.

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This is the waterway that Prime Minister Trudeau referred to as a "friendly ditch" when he spoke at the official celebration of the Seaway's Tenth Anniversary. It was on that same occasion at the Eisenhower Lock at Massena -- that President Nixon said, "This Seaway, which was conceived by men who dreamed of great things and was put into being by men who were able to produce them, is an indication of what can happen when nations work together -- when they can be at peace with each other."

My friends, there is no question that the ten-year period since the opening of the Seaway has certainly been a decade of fulfillment. The outstanding cooperation between Canada and the United States has linked the industrial and agricultural producers of the continental heartland directly with a rapidly expanding overseas market.

The Seaway has had its problems, yes, some of them serious. But this inland passage is a giant step forward which is bound to return increasing benefits to this country. I am especially confident that the years ahead will show even greater gains for all of the more than fifty ports in the Great Lakes region.

But while we talk of ten years of accomplishment and progress -- while we hail the Seaway as one of the greatest public works of all times -- let us also keep firmly in mind that the Seaway represents a great investment.

And I cannot help but think today -- faced as we are in this Nation with a mounting transportation crisis -- that massive planning and investment on a similar scale will be necessary for us to keep this Nation mobile.

The St. Lawrence Seaway cost American taxpayers many millions of dollars. Its planning took many years. And, let's face it, it may never pay for itself.

But the other side of the coin -- the benefits derived from the Seaway -- go far beyond the initial outlay of capital that was used to construct the system and inaugurate this famous "Fourth Seacoast" some ten years ago.

The topic here tonight is national transportation goals and I think it is altogether fitting and appropriate that perhaps the Seaway story be used, in a sense, as our text for the day.

Where else in American transportation do we have a transportation system ... which requires not only waterways and ships, but also loading terminals, unloading docks, waterfront rail facilities, fast, safe highways to the interior? Where else in American transportation do we have an efficient, inexpensive mode of moving goods and materials promptly and safely, that is better equipped to "interface" with the other types of transportation that form a network across this great Nation?

Historically, the developers of our great Nation have thought of transportation in terms of single modes -- of railroads, of highways, of airways, and of waterways. We have never given much thought as to how well each mode links up with the others.

I would submit to you here tonight that we no longer have a frontier to the West at which we can aim new railroads. We no longer have great areas of isolated natural resources that demand urgent access. We no longer hear the phrase "There's no way to get there from here." We hardly ever hear the words "There isn't any airline service to such-and-such a city."

Yes, we now have the facilities. The best in the world. But no, we have not done much of a job of tying them together. And that is a lesson we can learn from the Seaway.

I frankly admit that when I accepted this assignment as Secretary of Transportation I had no idea that the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation was part of my responsibilities.

But I know it now, and let me tell you -- I have learned a lot from the Seaway and from our Great Lakes transportation system.

President Nixon has assigned me the task of coming up with a national transportation policy for Americans, and while we are still working with the basic outlines of possible directions, several things are shaping up.

One of these is the unsettling fact that here in America we don't have a transportation system; at best, we have a network of sometimes compatible -- but often incompatible -- modes that have made paperwork, freight transfer, boxcar shortages, ore-car surpluses, and frustration a way of life with most traffic managers.

What we need -- in the most specific terms possible -- is a "meshing of these modes" into one effective, harmonious, cooperating and operationally integrated system for the movement of people and goods.

It won't be easy. Not by a long shot, which is one reason why I have told the President we'll probably need close to a year to come up with a policy paper rather than the six months he talked about initially.

The national transportation policy we are looking for should lay the groundwork for the progress of a generation. As most of you surely realize, transportation is one of the three or four essential keys to a better future for our increasingly affluent and increasingly impatient population.

This Administration is wide open to new ideas. We are looking for fresh new thinking from all quarters.

And I think I might say at this point that above and beyond the challenge of transportation -- which the President has included in his Top Ten domestic priority list -- the Nixon Administration is making an excellent start on critical problems which have been building up for a long time.

The President has made clear that he is determined to get a full nelson on this menace of inflation and bring it down. He is uncompromising on the rising threat of crime, whether that threat stems from the organized violence of the so-called "syndicates" or the random violence of the underdog. He has made his position on campus violence unmistakable. He has taken skillful and generous steps to bring the war in Vietnam to an honorable close. And he has had the courage to persist in his effort to establish an ABM defense of our nuclear deterrent.

This is an Administration whose mark on history is already being made. It is an Administration which thinks first and acts only after careful deliberation. And that of course is the intent of our assignment to develop a national transportation plan. Is such a plan really needed or is it just a bureaucratic fancy? Let's take a look at the facts.

By 1975 our population will increase by almost 25 million. More than 75 percent of our people will be city dwellers and about half of the urbanites will be crammed into three concentrations -- one on the Atlantic Seaboard, one on the West Coast, and another stretching from Chicago to Cleveland, including Detroit of course. Even now, 70 percent of our population lives on about 2 percent of the land.

Naturally, as we urbanize, our economy will expand and our society will become more complex. The gross national product is expected to rise by more than 50 percent in the next 8 years. People will be traveling more because of shorter work weeks, longer vacations, more frequent holidays and shifts in recreation patterns.

If we stick with traditional transportation practices we are going to run into a series of bottlenecks. Indeed, I think a great many Americans re-discovered over this past July 4th holiday weekend that bottlenecks, traffic jams, congestion and delays are already part and parcel of American life. The growth of our economy could start slowing down. Indeed, I believe it is already being affected.

This is not theory or scare talk. It is a real threat.

Today there are 86 million cars in the United States. By 1975 there will be at least 100 million, plus another 20 million trucks and buses.

We find even faster growth in air passenger travel. Commercial aviation will expand by 300 percent in the next 10 years. By 1979 1,200,000 people will be boarding airplanes every day. Over the next decade more than a thousand aircraft will be added to the airline fleet. Many will be jumbos. Private aviation is expanding from 114 thousand aircraft today to about 215 thousand during this period. The number of operations at tower-equipped airports will triple by the end of the seventies.

Obviously airports and airways must be expanded and updated. We have asked the Congress to approve new and higher user charges to pay for a ten year, five billion dollar program of necessary airport airway improvements. Users, whether ticket buyers or operators of private planes, can afford to pay for the services they receive. As our FAA Administrator Jack Shaffer said in Washington the other day, "We've been flying too long on the promise to pay later."

My friends, the time has come when we either pay for our privileges or we just won't enjoy air travel anywhere near as safe and convenient as it is today.

On another front, the hauling of freight is also being greatly challenged by prosperity. As the gross national product approaches and passes the trillion dollar mark there will be an enormous increase in demand for freight services. The railroads carried about 750 billion ton-miles of freight in 1966 and this figure will almost certainly rise to a trillion ton-miles by 1975. Trucks will be hauling not 400 billion ton-miles but 600 billion. This expanded tonnage will be flowing a lot more smoothly thanks to our magnificent Interstate Highway program, which has already reached the 28,000 mile mark out of a projected 42,000 miles. We can't stop building roads. We need more -- not only for economy but for safety reasons as well. And yet, highways alone can't do all of the job that lies ahead of us. All the modes will be expanding. Huge increases in business are expected by pipelines, inland water carriers, and air cargo people. International trade will double in ten years thanks to containerization, huge new planes, trade reforms, and of course the expanded utilization of the St. Lawrence Seaway!

What does all this mean? If growth continues we will have to double our transport capacity in the next 20 years -- double a capacity that took us about 150 years to put in place.

The next few years are going to witness a revolution in the way we handle freight and move people. There will be a great emphasis on intermodal planning and improving the modal "interface." Transition between modes will be much smoother. We will see the emergence of intermodal transportation companies -- I state categorically that this development is necessary and inevitable and nothing to be afraid of. The leaders in this movement will render a great public service and greatly improve their earnings to boot.

Any nation that can send three men to the moon or a robot rocket to mars, crack genetic codes and create vast computer systems can solve its transportation problems as well. In fact, we really don't have any choice but to begin now to do so. The rumbling of discontent from the ghetto, from the suburbs, as well as from the outlying regions is growing louder.

As the level of education rises, transportation is more and more going to be evaluated by social criteria. This doesn't really make my job any easier, but it is a fact of life.

American citizens today demand not only economy and convenience -- the usual requirements of transportation -- but safety and beauty, social justice, and a quiet, clean environment as well. And in a democracy, of course, our obligation is to meet the needs and requirements of the people. The people will be served, and this Administration is pledged to do it.

The great challenge then, is how to weigh necessary social costs and benefits against economic costs and benefits. That will never be a simple task. But with your knowledgeable assistance and constructive criticism as leaders we can achieve the great goal President Nixon has set for us -- providing a transportation system that is fully responsive to the broad social needs of the American people. That is a duty of leadership we must eagerly grasp and responsibly fulfill.

Again, let me thank you for inviting me here this evening. I have appreciated the opportunity to meet with you on the occasion of the historic Tenth Anniversary of the Seaway, and look forward to great progress on all transportation fronts in the decades ahead.

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