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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY JOHN A. VOLPE, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, AS RECIPIENT OF BOYS' TOWNS OF ITALY INTERNATIONAL AWARD, AT THE "BALL OF THE YEAR," IN THE GRAND BALLROOM OF THE WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL, NEW YORK, NEW YORK, MARCH 29, 1969, 9:00 P.M.

I am very honored to receive this award. I have always had a deep love and respect for the cause which Boys' Towns serves. And my admiration for you, Monsignor Carroll, grows greater with the years. If the measure of an award lies in the quality of the donor, and I'm sure it does, then this award from the Boys' Towns of Italy is the greatest tribute I have ever received. I thank you with all my heart.

I also want to thank you for inviting Mrs. Volpe and myself to be here. You might think that being Transportation Secretary I get the chance to go wherever I want, whenever I want. But the plain and simple fact is ... that we've been right up to "here" in work in the new Administration, and frankly this is the closest I've been to good old Boston since starting out in Washington back in January!

So I thank you for giving me the opportunity to get away -- for a short while at least -- from the tremendous tasks that face us as we work to establish a balanced, co-ordinated transportation system for this great nation. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, as they say, and it is truly refreshing and heartening to be with so many dear friends on an occasion such as this. And I must say we're impressed with the

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way you do things in New York ... and I can't help but think as I look out over this party and see all these fine, good looking, well-dressed youngsters of ours -- how different things are today. When we were youngsters remember how it was.... If your father found he still had five dollars in his pocket Saturday night -- and if there was no new baby coming along -- then it was time to go in business for himself. And he did. Of course, nothing changed. You and he still got up at six and went out and laid bricks all day...but now -- with these kids -- first, we've got to send them to Villanova or Fordham for four years at four thousand dollars per year. Then they come home and they want to go in the contracting business... "Dad, I need fifty thousand dollars for a new plumb line...."

I remember my own first day on the job. I was 14 years old and someone told me to stand in line. A minute later, I was handed a plasterer's hod and then someone filled it with mortar. I turned to my father who was standing nearby and asked him what I should do.

I shall never forget his words, "Go over to that ladder and start climbing it rung by rung till you reach the top."

I want to talk for a minute about my favorite subject...Boys' Towns of Italy.

When Boys' Towns began, the need was immediate and obvious. The death and destruction of war had left thousands of youngsters homeless and hungry and abandoned. Friends and relatives could not care for them for they, too, were without food and shelter. And Boys' Towns of Italy was born. We can all thank God for Monsignor Carroll -- for the great heart and for his great compassion that could reach out to thousands.

But the need for Boys' Towns today is just as great as it was then.

I was brought up to believe -- and I think many of you here tonight had the same belief -- that poverty is not necessarily a barrier to success. It was -- and still is -- my belief that with a willingness to work hard and with a spirit of perseverance and courage, a young man can overcome earlier handicaps. But we all have since learned other facts about poverty. We have learned that continued poverty and deprivation when combined with an absence of love and attention can destroy a child. Daily hunger and loneliness and the abandonment and rejection of a broken home can kill. The body lives, certainly -- and matures -- but the spirit is paralyzed, hope is crippled and growth is dead.

This is where Boys' Towns comes in. These homeless youngsters want to belong... They need to be wanted.... They need friends -- somebody to smile at -- somebody to call them by their first names. And all this is theirs at Boys' Towns. You can see the difference in the faces of the youngsters at Boys' Towns. I have. They are alive again. They have a home.

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But I don't think there is a single person here tonight who has any doubts about the value of Boys' Towns of Italy. We know of its necessity. There must always be Boys' Towns. I think we may falter, however, in figuring our debt to Boys' Towns. We may tend not to give as much as we should -- we may stint a little -- comforting ourselves with the thought that, after all, other people are giving, too.

But let me give you my thoughts on that.

We all live with charities and collections... the Diocesan Collection... the Collection for the Missions and you know equally well the appeal -- "give till it hurts." Now I'm not so sure about that giving till it hurts. Does it hurt? I look at the Monsignor here and I know it doesn't. He's been giving of himself all his life... He has given his every moment and all his energy -- always to the cause of others. Yet he's the happiest man here tonight. I think, then, my motto from now on will be to give till you find happiness. Try it... Give more than you think you should and you, too, will know what it's like to be Monsignor Carroll -- you will know for a brief instant what it's like to be a Saint.

The cause of Boys' Towns of Italy will never be far from my thoughts. Again, I thank you for this most prized award. This is one of the proudest days of my life.

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