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BRINEGAR - HIGHWAY USERS (Dinner Remarks)

I am happy to have this chance to meet with you. I am seeking facts and information. I am learning. I want to hear all sides.

I am certain that you gentlemen and I will -- despite our present differences -- be working closely together in the coming years. The Interstate Highway program is one of the biggest -- and most important -- activities in our Department. I intend to work for the completion of this system and I plan to insure that it is done well.

Since this is sort of an introductory meeting -- a "getting to know you" -- I'd like to tell you some of the general principles that will be guiding my decisions.

I am increasingly impressed as I move further into this new assignment with broader effects of transportation. Our primary assignment -- your's and mine -- is to help move passengers and freight. This is a very exciting task and well worth our effort. But if we look beyond this mobility and examine our secondary products, then our purpose becomes even more worthwhile.

Good transportation is a major factor in our economic prosperity. The very pragmatic writer-statesman, Francis Bacon noted this back 500 years ago. He wrote, "There are three things which make a nation great and prosperous -- a fertile land, busy workshops and easy conveyance for men and commodity."

America's truckers say the same thing in blunt Yankee prose. "If you've got it" -- they say -- "a truck brought it."

This mobility of our's adds value to our products. The citrus industry of Florida, if it depended on Florida markets, would collapse. Because the oranges and concentrate are on the shelves and in the freezers of supermarkets in New York and Chicago, they have additional value. The same with the wheat crop of Kansas, the lumber industry of the Northwest and the oil of the Southwest. All depend on efficient, economical transportation.

This connection of transportation and economic progress is as old as man himself. Egypt's glory sprang from the Nile and a lucky combination of current and wind. Traders let their dhows drift down the river with the current only to make a return passage on the strength of the prevailing wind that blew them back home. Athens prospered and conquered because the second home of every Athenian citizen was a ship. Rome tied its world together with Roman law and Roman roads -- both of which still survive in form. And later, Britain's merchant fleet made an empire that ruled the world.

And today? Let history decide.

The influence of transportation, of course, extends beyond economics. You well know how we have opened up rural America. But this has been the effect of transportation throughout our Nation's history. How many of



our cities began as "tank towns" and "whistle stops". Or even "one horse towns." Transportation advantages or considerations -- ports, railroad junctions, river portages -- determined the locations of most of America's cities and towns. And our own way of living is still being shaped by transportation changes. The suburbs --and the suburban way of life -- is a product of the good highway and the internal combustion engine.

We transportation planners are putting in new highways and airports and bus routes, reshaping and redeveloping communities. It is my intention, then, to pay close attention to this factor of community development in our transportation decisions.

I intend, too, to give the urgent matter of environmental protection and energy conservation the highest priority. I am familiar with the seriousness of each of these matters.

I must note that while I have come out of the oil industry and its close affiliation with the motor vehicle, I have no partiality. My sole interest is what kind of vehicle best meets the demand. I am interested in an inter-modal mix.

We in the Department shall be giving urban transportation problems long and close attention. The reason is immediate -- that's where the vast majority of Americans now live, work and enjoy leisure.

I am impressed particularly by the scope of the urban transportation dilemma. Too many people are thinking of urban transit in terms of commuter traffic jams -- in terms of buses and subways. When a number of railroads terminate in a city with no common interface we have not only a railroad problem but also an urban problem. I consider it an urban

challenge that an air traveler too often spends more time getting to and from an airport than he does in the air.

I wonder, too, if we are not relying too heavily on the promise of technology -- on new systems and on research and development. I am certainly an admirer and a firm believer in American inventiveness, and, in fact, have ever done a bit of it myself. But it's possible to fall into the trap of the dog food manufacturer who invents a great dog food -- at least all his research people like it -- the advertisers like it -- the customers like the packaging -- but for some reason the dogs won't eat it.

I certainly will welcome -- from any source -- any ideas for improving safety -- that is safety in all modes -- right across the board. It seems to me that here in the matter of saving lives and property damage, all of us in the industry must work together. I hope, therefore, that you and I will be working very closely with each other. The rate of highway accidents must be lowered.

In the pursuit of these objectives, I shall be seeking facts, opinion, and conjecture -- from all sources and on this intelligence, we shall move forward. I remember somewhere that DesCartes observed that two barriers to clear thinking were haste and prejudice. I fully agree with him, but unfortunately the good Mr. DesCartes never had a government job. He never had Congress in front of him, the Penn Central in back of him; he never had Detroit on his right hand and the environmentalists on his left. But still I enjoy it. I would have it no other way.

Thank you.