

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR  
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE  
FOR SENATOR LARRY PRESSLER'S TELEVISION SHOW TAPING  
MARCH 6, 1985

1. Today, we would like to address "The Executive Branch of Government" from the very special perspective of a woman who serves in the President's cabinet and heads one branch of our Armed Services. Would you please share some of your personal thoughts about public service at the highest levels of the Reagan Administration?

EHD It is a great honor to be a member of President Reagan's cabinet and a part of this Administration. I am also very honored to be the first woman to head a branch of our Armed Services, the United States Coast Guard. I am excited about the tremendous change taking place under the President's leadership, not just the strong economy growing ever stronger as shown by the latest economic indicators but too, the renewal of spirit and resurgence of confidence that has been America's strength since our nation was founded.

2. Tell us more about your work at the Department of Transportation. What are some of the programs that serve people in South Dakota?

EHD We have more than 100,000 employees and responsibility for making and executing federal policy on all forms of transportation -- highways, airways, seaways, railways, urban mass transportation and the commercial use of outer space. We deal with difficult issues ranging from safe transportation of hazardous materials to revamping the national airspace system to accommodate growth of air traffic into the

next century. One program which should be very visible to South Dakotans is the result of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982. Since passage of that Act we have seen \$29.6 billion in federal funds pumped into the national highway program. Highways and bridges all across this land are being rehabilitated. These are the highways that take your products to market, your raw material to factories and finished goods to the show case.

**3. You certainly have had a very successful career and are a role model for many of the women in this country. Would you please share some of your experiences as a woman in achieving the status of United States Secretary of Transportation.**

**EHD** In Washington, as you know, Larry, we cannot afford to be too impressed with status. I remember one morning shortly after the President nominated me for Secretary of Transportation. I had completed my confirmation hearing in the Senate, and I was eager to talk to someone about my great new position. I went by my old office at the White House where I was Assistant to the President for Public Liaison. They were so busy preparing for my successor they didn't have time to talk about the Department of Transportation. So, I dropped by to see Drew Lewis, my predecessor. Drew was busy packing. He looked at a box of elephants and said, "Elizabeth would you like an elephant." I said, "Drew, when I married Bob Dole I inherited more elephants than I know what to do with." Then, I decided to call Bob. I said, "let's have lunch." He said, "Elizabeth, you must have forgotten, I'm going to Kansas. My plane leaves in an hour." Finally, I called my mother who lives in my hometown, Salisbury, N. C. She is usually always interested in what we are doing in Washington. But on this day, she said, "Elizabeth, I can't talk now. I have a living room full of newspaper reporters and the television crews are coming by any minute." So, it always pays to keep your achievements in perspective.

It is true I've been on the cutting edge of what I like to call a "quiet revolution" taking place in this country for the past 20 years. Women have been making the transition into important new roles that utilize their skills and motivation. All across this country millions of women are taking advantage of new opportunities and their horizons are broadening. The result of this revolution is good for women and even better for the country. We need the skills and enthusiasm of women to help resolve some of the problems facing the nation today.

**4. What particular hurdles have you had to overcome?**

**EHD** There have been hurdles. I recall a day in September 1962 when I entered Harvard Law School, one of 25 women in a class of 550 prospective movers and shakers. I'll never forget being accosted by a male classmate on my first day at Harvard, who demanded to know what I was doing there.

"Don't you realize," he said in tones of moral outrage, "that there are men who'd give their right arm for your place in law school? Men who would use their legal education?" The inference was that I was taking a man's place. And come to think of it, some may have felt that way when I became the first woman Secretary of Transportation. This is a time of firsts for women and whatever the hurdles, the rewards are great.

**5. What educational experiences would you say have been especially helpful to you?**

**EHD** I've been fortunate to have valuable educational experiences at every level of my education, from earliest grammar school in my hometown of Salisbury, N.C.

through Duke University and Harvard Law School. But I continue to learn every day. I've found experience one of the finest teachers and life, a daily learning experience.

7. **Returning to your work at the Department of Transportation, do you need local support on any transportation issues? What could Dakotans do to help affect national transportation policy?**

**EHD** The single issue crying out for local support all across this country is highway safety. Many South Dakotans already are a part of a groundswell of public support for ridding our highways of drunk drivers and using the best defense against the drunk driver: the safety belt, a proven life-saver. I have made safety my highest priority. I urge all of you to join me. We will not rest until every last drunk driver is off the roads and highways of this country. And in this effort we return where the crusade started -- to the grassroots. The government can pass laws; it can lock up drunk drivers; it can deter law-breaking. But ultimately nothing can so much assure compliance with laws as an aroused, caring citizenry. We must wage the battle as civic groups and as individuals. Service groups must get out the message of just how gruesome the statistics are. Individual citizens must urge friends not to take that last drink for the road and to use the proven life-saver, the safety belt. I hope all South Dakotans will join me in this important move. Together, we can make a real difference.

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