



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

98-DOT-72

REMARKS BY U. S. UNDER SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JAMES M. BEGGS
TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MOTOR BUS OPERATORS, NEW ORLEANS,
LOUISIANA, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1972

Over the years the intercity bus has been a dependable, economical and widely accessible means of public transportation. You alone put passenger and parcel service within the reach of 41,000 cities, communities and crossroads all across America. Last year 389 million people traveled from town to town by bus - more than double the number who traveled by air carrier.

Yet you and I know that nationally about two percent of all intercity passengers travel by bus while 87 percent travel by car. Very nearly the same ratio holds true in the urban environment. Eighty-two percent of America's commuters get to work by car, even though 54 percent of all car trips are less than five miles.

These statistics alone tell us much about our country's transportation dilemma. Simply stated, while we enjoy a multiple-choice mobility, we have shown a lop-sided preference for the private car, a choice that is costing us dearly in time, money and natural resources.

The whole utility of transportation depends on its efficiency ability to take you where you want to go with maximum ease and at minimum cost. We have long relied on technology to improve speed, comfort and performance. Today's better buses on today's better highways are a case in point. But no matter how technically proficient we become, no single means of transportation is likely to be the one best answer to our diverse transportation needs and tastes. And for all of our technical progress, we will never achieve the integrated, well-balanced national transportation system we must have unless we apply existing capabilities in new ways, attain a better distribution of the total transportation load, and accept some trade-offs between performance and overall social objectives.

We are closer to our goals today than we were four years ago. When President Nixon came to office, the great American transportation machine was showing the signs of age and national neglect. Before President Nixon secured passage of the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act, public transit was on the ropes in many American communities and down for the first count in others. Before President Nixon pumped new life and new resources into our airports and airways, traffic growth was outstripping airport development, automation was lagging, and terminal congestion was causing flight delays and disrupted schedules. Before the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 was passed, clean, comfortable and convenient rail service in the United States had dwindled almost to the disappearing point. Before President Nixon called for greater highway safety and directed a joint program of car, highway and driver safety reforms, increases in the highway fatality toll were an annual event. And before 1970 there were precious few Federal funds for university research, community planning, or development and demonstration projects aimed at better transportation technologies and services.

In the first two years of his Administration, the President's transportation initiatives resulted in eight major bills -- more substantive transportation legislation than was passed by the previous two administrations. And for better than a year now we have been working to extend that progressive legislative record into two vital areas -- some needed reforms of and assistance to the surface transportation industry, and greater Federal aid for urban transportation systems.

Let me comment on our policy with respect to Federal assistance for urban transportation needs, because a failure to clear our metropolitan areas of unnecessary city traffic is going to affect every intercity bus operator who serves a downtown terminal.

Our Interstate System today is half a dream come true. With 34,000 miles -- 80 percent of the system -- now open to traffic, the Interstate network makes highway travel safer, faster and decidedly more pleasant. The death and injury rates on Interstate routes are roughly half the rate of non-Interstates. Time savings over the non-city segments of Interstate corridors range from 10 to 50 percent. Interstate driving is two cents a mile cheaper for the average motorist, and no doubt you have done your own calculations on the relative costs of Interstate and non-Interstate bus operations.

But once in the city - any city - travel becomes less than pleasant, and highway construction alone -- even to the most enlightened engineering and cosmetic standards -- is not likely to make the second half of our highway transportation dream-- easy access to, from and through our cities -- come true.

We are rapidly becoming a highly-urbanized nation. Seventy two percent of our people now live in city complexes that together comprise only three percent of our land. The city today is a confluence for business and industry, a mecca for tourists, a magnet for millions of people in quest of jobs, entertainment, culture and commercial enterprise. And when we add to the resident population those who arrive every day by air or rail, demanding taxis, buses and rental cars to complete their journey, the burden on a city's streets and expressways takes on staggering proportions.

The realization is gradually taking hold across the country that without adequate public transportation our urban centers cannot survive -- that in a predominantly auto-oriented society, the costs of congestion, pollution and community discord are becoming unacceptable. "Rush hour" travel today is an exercise in futility -- a colossal waste of people's time and energy resources. For the motor bus driver as for the motorist, 70-mile-per-hour expressways may as well be cobblestone streets, when traffic is reduced to horse and buggy speeds.

In an effort to correct this anomaly, and to get all the mileage out of our highways that highway users pay for, we submitted to Congress last Spring legislation which would permit the Nation's highway program to continue, and at the same time promote balanced transportation in our urban areas. We recommended that a portion of the highway trust funds -- we believe about 10 percent is appropriate -- be allocated for urban systems, with state and local officials free to determine how those funds should best be used. As you know, the Senate concurred in this proposal; the House did not. As a result, Congress adjourned without enacting new highway legislation.

Now, it is clearly not in the national interest for the highway program to be disrupted or on-going work interrupted. We believe firmly in the necessity for a dynamic and comprehensive national highway program. The Nixon Administration has spent more money for highways -- almost \$19 billion -- than any previous administration. It is vital that construction of the Interstate continue, and it is equally essential that we keep pace with our secondary and rural road needs. So in the absence of new highway legislation, Secretary Volpe last week released the states from categorical restrictions on existing Federal obligations, so that maximum use could be made of available funds; and advised the states to exercise existing authority to undertake Interstate projects for which they can be reimbursed when new highway legislation is enacted.

We are confident that the 93rd Congress will take up highway legislation as an early and urgent matter of business, and we are equally hopeful that provision will be made for the funding flexibility local officials must have to meet their critical urban transportation needs.

If we are to achieve the balanced transportation system that is our goal, we must succeed in making the public transportation and highway interests allies, not adversaries. The Association of Motor Bus Operators can be the catalyst in helping to forge that partnership. Intercity or urban, the bus is the logical alternative to the auto.

We know it's cheaper. Studies show it costs 13 1/2 cents a mile to travel by car, compared to 3.8 cents a mile by bus. Over the 10-year life of the average car, a motorist pays \$1800 for parking and tolls, \$2200 for maintenance and repair, \$1350 for insurance, \$1325 in taxes and at the end of ten years he has a car worth \$200 to \$300 in trade.

We also know the bus is more efficient -- five times more efficient than the car.

And we know that when the bus is accorded the priority its carrying capacity merits, it can be faster and more convenient. The express buses operating on the Shirley Highway near Washington save commuters 20 to 30 minutes per trip, and the I-495 Lincoln Tunnel busways in New York City have reduced travel times an average of 44 percent.

The benefits are two-fold. More people take advantage of bus capacities. And highway traffic as a whole moves faster. Over the two years of our Shirley Highway experiment, automobile traffic during the rush hour period declined nearly 30 percent. Bus ridership from the Virginia suburbs increased 230 percent. More than half of the Shirley Highway commuters now take the bus during the morning rush hours.

While the bus lanes were designed as a public transit innovation, they are open to intercity bus traffic as well. Intercity travelers have full access to the busways, and to the time-saving convenience they afford. Widespread adoption of the bus corridor concept in cities across the country would be a good investment for the bus operator's transportation tax dollar.

Demonstrating that bus travel can be better is the best way I know of to get more people out of their cars. And once people get the "bus habit" -- once they discover that local bus travel can save them time, money, and frustration, the attraction of the bus as an intercity carrier should become increasingly obvious.

For our part, I suspect that at least some portion of last year's two million mile increase in intercity bus travel could be attributed the surge in the economy, the growth in leisure time and the steady improvement of our highways. But certainly credit is due the industry for your efforts toward improving passenger service, developing new terminals, and introducing new equipment. I had the opportunity recently to see Greyhound's new Turbocruiser and I was very much impressed. From what I understand, the public is also impressed -- the four Turbo-cruisers now in operation, I'm told, are much in demand.

When you come right down to it, much of our success in bringing better balance and greater efficiency to transportation in America depends on our ability to change some of the habits and overturn some of the transportation concepts we have long taken for granted.

Just as there is no substance to the notion some people have that bus travel is demeaning, neither is there any logic to the idea that everyone who goes downtown -- or to the next town -- must drive his own car. Neither is there any reason why we must continue to accept environmental pollution, excessive noise, and 50,000 traffic deaths a year as unavoidable by-products of our passion for independent mobility.

Under President Nixon's leadership, we have finally made a dent in the nation's death toll -- a small dent, to be sure, but for the past two consecutive years, highway fatalities have declined slightly, even though the numbers of vehicles and drivers on the road continue to increase.

The intercity bus industry has long been a real standard-bearer in highway safety. Your passenger fatality rate of 0.08 deaths per 100 million passenger miles, for the years 1969-70, is less than four percent of the rate for auto travel, and is a mark the motoring population collectively should strive to match.

Our goal in the Department is to bring about a 50 percent reduction in total highway deaths by 1980. Our most intensive efforts to date have been aimed at getting the drunk driver off the road and into rehabilitation programs, and in the attainment of safer, more crash resistant vehicles. You may be sure that our crackdown on highway safety hazards -- whether vehicle or driver-induced -- will get tougher.

I remarked earlier that we are closer to our transportation ideals than we were four years ago, when President Nixon came to office committed to a fuller realization of better mobility for more Americans. I think the record supports that statement.

From a budget of less than \$135 million in FY 1969, President Nixon has brought funding for public transportation to the billion dollar level - an eightfold increase.

Under the Airport-Airways Development Act, Federal resources for airport development have quadrupled, and funds for airport planning have tripled. Airline flight delays have been cut in half over the past two years and are less than a third of what they were in 1969.

As a result of our campaign against drunk drivers, fatal crashes in the 35 areas of the United States where Alcohol Safety Action Projects have been established declined 8.6 percent last year while deaths went up 1.5 percent in the non-ASAP areas. The number of driving-while-intoxicated arrests in the counties and communities having Alcohol Safety Action Projects in force increased 70 percent. While these figures are not conclusive, they do suggest that the number of fatal highway accidents in which alcohol is a factor -- estimated at nearly half the total -- can be reduced. Since 73 percent of the inter-city bus fatalities and 59 percent of the injuries in 1970 resulted from collisions with autos -- and since bus drivers don't drink while driving -- I believe it is fair to assume that whatever success we achieve in removing the drunk driver from the highway will enhance the safety of bus transportation.

As another indication of President Nixon's staunch support for transportation, funds for research and development have been increased substantially. In FY 1969, only \$114 million (1.7 percent of the DOT budget) was earmarked for R and D. This has increased every year -- to \$153 million in 1970, \$209 million in '71, \$307 million for '72, and \$387 million (4.5 percent of our budget) in FY 1973. Additionally, our University Research program is funded at the highest level in the Department's history.

Nationally, the country is enjoying a robust economy and a growing prosperity. When President Nixon took office, the United States had one of the highest rates of inflation of any major industrial nation in the world. Today it has the lowest.

The job market is increasing at the fastest rate in more than 20 years. While we hear a lot about unemployment, the facts are that the number of people with jobs increased 250,000 in September alone, to an all-time U.S. employment high of 82.2 million. There are 3.8 million more job-holders today than in June of 1971.

Retail sales were up 10.5 percent in July and August. Business expenditures for new plant and equipment are expected to total nearly \$90 billion for 1972, a 9.7 percent increase over 1971.

Consumer spending reached a \$713 billion rate in the second quarter of 1972, an increase of 10 percent, and up \$53 billion from the second quarter 1971 level. But in the first full year of the President's economic stabilization program, the consumer price index went up only 2.9 percent, compared to 4.4 percent the preceding 12-month period. The 7.1 percent increase in the average rank-and-file workers' weekly earnings is more than twice the 2.9 percent increase in consumer prices, which means that workers have more real income -- more spendable income, under President Nixon's new economic policy.

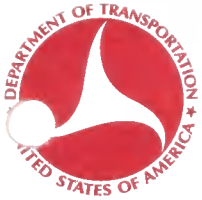
I suggest that's good for the transportation industry and good for the country. More Americans are working today, earning more money, spending more, and traveling more than ever before in history. They are discovering America in growing numbers, and discovering anew that the bus is the economic, the dependable, and the scenic way to go.

The quicker we learn to rely more heavily on the bus, the sooner we will achieve the full measure of mobility we want from our transportation dollar. And the sooner we work together to solve our common transportation problems, the faster we will move forward, as individuals and as a Nation.

The criteria for nation-building have not changed very much since the 16th century, when Francis Bacon observed that "there are three things which make a nation great and prosperous -- a fertile soil, busy workshops, and easy conveyance for men and commodities."

We have a great land, great industry, and we are on the way to greater achievements in the "conveyance of men and commodities."

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103-DOT-72

REMARKS BY U.S. UNDER SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JAMES M. BEGGS TO THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYMPOSIUM, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, DECEMBER 2, 1972

Good afternoon. It is my privilege to have the closing word, but by no means the final word, on the question of an intermodal transportation plan for the Bay Area. I have listened with much interest to the comments, the suggestions, and the discussions of the past several hours. May I say that in my opinion, the Commission is to be commended for sponsoring this Symposium and for inviting public participation. This has, indeed, been a real work session.

Transportation planning is a relatively new phenomenon in our society. Over the years, roads have been built as needed, streets have been laid out on demand, rail and air routes have developed in response to popular travel habits, and bus and rapid transit lines have more or less followed existing intra-city and intercity corridors. But, until recently, there has been little deliberate transportation planning, and almost no intermodal transportation planning on a national, state or regional basis.

Today those oversights are being corrected, and just in time. Coordinated, long-range planning is vital to our mobility, and essential to the survival of our cities. Transportation is no longer a city problem, or a county problem, or a suburban problem -- isolated from other municipal needs and interests. It's become a common problem, and its treatment a community necessity.

No longer can highway builders, airport developers, or port authorities make decisions or take actions that do not affect the community as a whole. And for that reason, the whole community must be involved in the planning, decision and implementation processes.

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The Regional Transportation Plan, now taking shape for adoption by next July, promises to be very important to the future of the San Francisco area. In putting this plan together, you are writing the Magna Charta for methodical transportation progress, for liberation from congestion, and for freedom from the frustrations and waste of transportation inefficiencies. This plan is a giant step towards the kinds of mobility and the quality of life you want for the decades ahead. I urge you to think of it in no lesser terms.

You have been given the mandate to work out your transportation destiny. But more than mobility is at stake. The transportation choices and decisions you make will have profound effects on the social, economic and environmental future of this nine-country Bay Area.

But you don't have to "go it alone." Let me outline briefly what you can expect from Washington.

First; you can count on more of the tools you need to make local programs work and local ambitions come true. President Nixon believes that the functions of government should be performed and the decisions made as close to the people as possible. As the President has said, the keystone of his urban strategy is to give communities not only the dollars they need, but the freedom and the responsibility they need to use those dollars effectively. The President views his landslide victory, at least in part, as an endorsement of his programs to make government increasingly responsive to the voice of the average citizen -- to shape events and to make good things happen in their lives and in their communities.

Secondly, then; you can look to Washington with greater confidence for the resources you need to put your regional plan together, and to begin its implementation. You can expect a ready and willing response on our part to well-founded requests for capital grants for transportation equipment, facilities and planning purposes -- for highways, airports and transit systems.

And, third; you can depend on a helping hand from Washington in supporting long-term solutions to transportation problems, so long as (1) proposals reflect area-wide planning and a coordinated approach; (2) plans are reviewed periodically and updated frequently; and (3) emphasis is put on intermodal development and not just modal improvements.

In the past few years we have performed a number of life-saving operations and rescue missions to keep badly-needed but sadly-neglected public transit systems from collapsing in some 60 U.S. cities. We have also greatly increased -- in fact, nearly quadrupled -- the funds available to the states and cities for airport development. And for all of this renewed attention to civil aviation and public transportation, the Nixon Administration has spent more money for highways -- some \$19 billion -- than any previous Administration.

Our larger objective is not just to keep public transit systems afloat, but to get them back into the mainstream of America's mobility; not just to expand airports, but to integrate them into a metropolitan region's total transportation "traffic pattern;" not just to pour concrete, but to construct highways that will be eminently safer and environmentally more pleasing. And just as we needed a single department to bring all the components of transportation under one roof in Washington, so do regions like San Francisco need new institutional entities, like this Commission, to develop area-wide solutions to area-wide problems.

We are aware that all too often in the past Federal financial support has been unavailable to meet the most pressing transportation needs, while at the same time there has been a sufficiency of funds for less important or less urgent projects. Although it is unlikely that Federal funds will ever be metered out at the exact times or in the precise increments desired, we believe there is much to be gained by allowing states and localities more freedom and flexibility in the use of categorical funds.

The Highway Act of 1970, for example, extended the use of Highway Trust Fund resources to highway safety programs, exclusive busways, bus shelters, fringe parking facilities, and even for the construction of ferry boats.

Now we would like to extend that concept still further, by authorizing a portion of highway user revenues for strictly urban transportation projects -- whether those projects take the shape of express highways or express bus lanes, road systems or rail systems, freeways or subways. Highway travelers will never get the mileage out of the highway system they pay for unless some of the transportation burden is shifted to alternative modes. We believe it is not enough to lace our urban communities with 60 mph highways if the utility of those highways is going to be hopelessly impaired by traffic congestion.

In an effort to correct this anomaly, and to get all the mileage out of our highways that highway users pay for, we submitted to Congress last Spring legislation which would permit the Nation's highway program to continue, and at the same time promote balanced transportation in our urban areas. We recommended that a portion of the highway trust funds -- we believe about 10 percent is appropriate -- be allocated for urban systems, with state and local officials free to determine how those funds should be used. As you know, the Senate concurred in this proposal; the House did not. As a result, Congress adjourned without enacting new highway legislation.

We are confident that the 93rd Congress will take up highway legislation as an early and urgent matter of business, and we are equally hopeful that provision will be made for the funding flexibility local officials must have not only to meet their critical urban transportation needs, but to put resources to use where they will be of most benefit to the region.

You and I know that in the past communities have not always had a real choice in the use of transportation dollars. Considering the Federal cost-sharing formula, in many cases it's been highways or nothing. You made a hard choice here in San Francisco when you elected years ago to build your own rapid transit system. And while it may be premature to make a long-range assessment, I'm confident that in the years ahead the BART system will fully justify the wisdom of that decision.

Now the country at large is recognizing what you discovered here -- that in a predominantly auto-oriented society, the costs of congestion, pollution and community discord are becoming unacceptable. The answer lies not in the abolition of the automobile any more than it lies in its wholesale acceptance. The solution is not to quit building roads, but to begin using surface transportation facilities to better advantage.

A traffic count recently showed that in a two hour period, from 7 a.m. to 9:00, 134,000 passenger cars came into the District of Columbia on a typical weekday. Two-thirds of those vehicles contained only one person -- the driver. In the course of the average day, some 550,000 automobiles funnel into Washington... and out again. Conservatively, 10,000 buses could accommodate the commuting needs of Washingtonians, leaving the streets and roadways accessible to commercial and other essential traffic.

To make urban mobility work, traffic must move, the modes must merge, and the whole transportation network must function as a system. There is a place for the private car in the commuter equation, but it is to link the commuter to a rail or bus service, not to his office door. We will never achieve our goal of balanced transportation for the Nation, and you will not achieve it for this region, unless we overcome our current lopsided dependence of the automobile for personal mobility.

On the open road the car, truck and bus are efficient machines. But in the stop-and-go conditions of city traffic today, it is difficult to imagine a more inefficient machine, than the internal combustion engine. To remedy its pollution habits, we have already assessed a performance penalty against the automobile powerplant, and my friends in Detroit tell me that in order to meet the prescribed 1975 emission standards, the efficiency of the gasoline engine will be reduced again ... rather substantially. We face this prospect, I might add, right at the time the perils of an impending energy crisis are becoming more apparent.

I am not an alarmist -- I have great faith in the technical dexterity of American industry -- but I believe that any transportation plan that puts ineffable faith in the undiminished expansion of the internal combustion-powered motor vehicle is short-sighted and naive. If we are to preserve the car for the purposes to which it is best suited, we must work to provide attractive alternatives to the motor car for the purposes to which it is not well suited.

Someone remarked the other day that ideas used to germinate in the East and migrate West. Today, the West -- California, especially -- is increasingly the incubation center for progressive ideas, fashions and trends.

Here in the Bay area you said "no" to the uncontrolled spread of "automobility" and took the bold and necessary steps to evoke an acceptable alternative to urban travel by motor car. Now cities across the land are following your lead.

We won't know the full impact of the BART system for some time. Together with HUD, we are investing some \$700,000 this year in the initial phases of what will probably be a \$10 million, four-year data collection and evaluation program to examine and analyze the total BART experience. But the fact that you are here today, and the very existence of this Commission, clearly demonstrates that the mountain of public apathy can be moved ... transportation customs and travel habits can be changed. Moreover, having built the first new fixed rail system the United States has seen in 60 years, you are far from satisfied that the job is done or the task complete. You already have the makings of a good transportation system in the Bay Area -- good roads, good water and rail transportation, good airports, five functioning bus companies -- but you have the capacity and the desire, to do better: you have the means to structure an excellent transportation system, a true model for the Nation.

Since 1969 we have allocated \$230 million for the BART program under the provisions of the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act. Just two months ago President Nixon came out here to bring \$38 million in Federal grants to help complete the 75-mile system, and we followed that allocation with a \$27.2 million grant for the purchase of 100 additional rapid transit cars.

We have the utmost confidence, not only in the BART system, but in your ability to forge an effective, efficient, well-balanced total transportation system for the entire Bay Area.

As I said earlier, there are no rabbits to be pulled out of silk hats in Washington, and no magic to make your transportation problems disappear. But we are there to help, to furnish advice and technical assistance, and to provide financial aid for capital equipment and planning purposes. We have a centralized source of technical competence in our Transportation Systems Center in Massachusetts. The Center is the technical arm and the technical repository of the Department, the primary focal point for the exchange of technical, planning and economic understanding. We want to share that technology, and the planning assistance, with state, regional and community groups, and I invite you to take full advantage of this resource and of all the resources of our Department.

You have what it takes to make the Bay Area Regional Transportation Plan a model for cities across our country. In the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, you have the single agency chartered to speak and to act for the entire region. In the BART system you have the nucleus of a versatile and truly intermodal transportation conglomerate. And in the plan now being written you have the comprehensive long-range work program that is a prerequisite for application for Federal funds.

Thank you for inviting me to this symposium. I wish you every success in meeting the challenges ahead.



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105-DOT-72

REMARKS BY U.S. UNDER SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JAMES M. BEGGS AT THE PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL AIR AND SURFACE SEARCH AND RESCUE SEMINAR, SHERATON-PALACE HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, DECEMBER 4, 1972

The significance of our Seminar can be appreciated in the dramatic overtones of the phrase "disaster at sea...." We Twentieth Century men have learned great confidence. We have traveled to the Moon. Our machines have conquered time and space. We have put an end to most disease and pestilence. We have changed the course of rivers and harnessed the energy of their currents. We have tunneled the mountains and built roads across the desert. Much of Nature has lost its terror. Yet this confidence of our's ends with the shoreline. We have gained very little advantage against the power and cruelty of the sea. A gale on the North Atlantic or a South Pacific typhoon can still destroy, in an instant, the strongest vehicles or structures our science and technology can produce.

Those of you with salt water in your veins know that the wisdom of Joseph Conrad's observation still holds, "I have known the sea too long to believe in its respect for decency."

Yet these unstable and dangerous oceans continue to grow in popularity as avenues of transport. All phases of ocean travel and cargo -- tonnage, mileage and number of passengers -- grow greater every year.

Last year, ships sailing the blue Pacific completed 100,000 voyages. And overhead, civilian aircraft completed more than 90,000 flights. There is, in fact, about 115 aircraft airborne over Pacific waters at any one time.

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This increasing volume is matched by a growing variety of ships and aircraft transiting these waters. Our marine fleet stretches from small yachts upwards to giant supertankers and our trans oceanic aircraft begin with small general aviation planes and grow on up to the giant 747's whose cabins hold as many as 400 passengers. Our cargoes grow more valuable every day -- and often more dangerous -- and the human life of our passengers is as precious as ever.

The need for preparation for disaster -- the need for sound search and rescue theory and practice -- is, thus, greater than ever.

I can best emphasize one of our hopes for this seminar by citing an observation on the growth of man's knowledge that was made by the National Education Association. This group estimates that the total sum of our scientific knowledge doubled for the first time in 1750 -- the second time in 1900. It doubled again in 1950 and -- for the fourth time -- only 10 years later in 1960. The progression is startling, and keeping abreast of this torrent of information has become one of the major scientific problems of the day. It is no less a problem for those whose concern is safety. Our first challenge, then, is securing the new and the better and discarding the old.

I confess I do not know the final answer to this. I do know of some companies in private industry who make it a practice not to hire any engineers who have been out of school more than five years. But I do not think that is the answer. I prefer instead the technique employed by an elderly Dean of Electrical Engineering at an Eastern college I know. He went to great lengths to hire a new instructor -- a youngster of 21 years and only a few days out of graduate school. When the young instructor agreed to sign on my friend, the Dean, could not contain his joy. And the reason for my friend's delight? As he put it, "Now I can take his course!" Ladies and Gentlemen, let's take each other's courses!

I want to make it plain -- in this matter of sharing knowledge -- that we in the United States are most anxious to help resolve the challenge resulting from this explosive growth of knowledge. We stand ready to make available to all countries any information or expertise that will help improve transportation safety. Similarly, we are most anxious to learn and to put to use techniques and systems other nations have found worthwhile.

There is another complexity that makes our Seminar here this week most important. In any single search and rescue operation, the number of organizations that may be involved are formidable. Consider the number of departments contributing to a purely American SAR operation.... The list might show NASA and its weather satellite; the vessels or aircraft of the Department of Defense; the thoughtful men of the Federal Aviation Administration's Air Traffic Control services; the Weather Service; the ships and planes of several private American and foreign transport companies; and finally, the all important United States Coast Guard. It is vital that the personnel of these various organizations meet and discuss common concerns. This, too, must be our purpose.

It is this complexity, moreover, that gives special urgency to a new undertaking.

There is a movement underway to establish a new International Search and Rescue Organization. We in the Department of Transportation are enthusiastic supporters of this plan and we hope for its success. I hope the members of this Seminar are similarly disposed. I hope, furthermore, that during your deliberations of the next few days that you will be attentive to anything which might contribute to the better formation and the smoother operation of the new organization.

This new search and rescue body will operate worldwide and it is now being set up under the auspices of the United Nations -- specifically by experts working under the Maritime Safety Committee of IMCO -- the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization. The United States is coordinating these preliminary efforts and search and rescue experts from our Coast Guard are now actively at work.

Let me note here that despite these maritime origins, the plan will be also aircraft oriented and one of the working experts comes from ICAO -- the International Civil Aviation Organization.

New figures recently released by Lloyd's underlie the need for the proposed organization. Despite all our great advances in science and technology, there is still, somewhere in the world everyday, better than one major ship disaster. Last year 377 ocean going vessels were totally destroyed in marine disasters. Equally disturbing is Lloyd's report that the total tonnage lost last year was the greatest since the company started keeping records.

The purpose of the new international body will be to alleviate these losses and lessen peril at sea. It will provide for cooperation between the various national shore organizations and the different groups participating in surface search and rescue operations at sea. We intend the program will set up standardized SAR procedures and that it will open the way to direct contact between the search and rescue services of the member states.

The working experts are especially concerned with the following elements of the new program:

1. Communications.
2. An inventory of available SAR facilities and their response time.
3. Utilization of existing position reporting systems and existing ocean station vessels.
4. The utilization of transient ships and aircraft in SAR operations.
5. Expanding regional arrangements and setting up joint exercises among participating countries.

6. The rescue of persons from ditched aircraft, drilling and production platforms and other special cases.
7. The rescue of space personnel in emergency landings.
8. The rescue of persons trapped in submerged vehicles.

You will be discussing many of these topics in your various conferences this week. I hope you will keep the new plan in mind and, when any material that would be helpful to the new organization comes your way, jot it down. The working group of experts is most anxious to have your contributions.

There is another element to the successful operation of any search and rescue mission, and as far as I am concerned, this is the most important of all -- far more important than science and technology.

The search for a stricken vessel or aircraft -- and the subsequent rescue of its passengers is different from most professional endeavors. It involves first of all that most noble of all human efforts -- the saving of another's life. Certainly other professions -- notably doctors -- also practice this unselfish craft. Rescue at sea is different, however, in that it almost always involves danger. A ship does not founder in calm waters, and the vessel is not blown off course by the soft scudding breeze. The usual environment of the search and rescue mission is, rather, the environment of peril. I believe, then, that you men of the Coast Guard and your counterparts from other lands have a unique calling. I believe the promise of the double confrontation -- this reaching for the richest of all prizes at the greatest of all dangers ... makes for a different man. I can attest to it. I can attest that the men and officers of our United States Coast Guard stand a little taller. I can attest that they ask more of those they meet -- for they ask more of themselves. I hope this superiority will be acknowledged here. And now I hope, too, that it will be an objective of those of us at this Seminar who are the beneficiaries of their uncommon courage to acknowledge our debt. All of us who travel over the sea -- whether by ship or aircraft -- owe them thanks. And so I say to you men who have chosen peril as your calling -- we wish you well. May your days be many and may they be happy.

I suggest this Conference make these sentiments unanimous.

Thank you.

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