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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, ALAN S. BOYD, BEFORE THE TWELFTH HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION CONGRESS AT THE INTERNATIONAL BALLROOM WEST, WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL, THRUSDAY, 12:00 NOON, APRIL 18, 1968

A stranger in this country and in this time might well expect a larger turnout for a Highway Users Conference since that definition - taken literally - covers some 200 million people.

But, in view of some of the interpretations that have been placed on some of the things we are trying to do at the Department of Transportation, I am glad it is a relatively small group.

And in that context, I appreciate this opportunity to meet with you today and to tell it the way it is.

The open road has always been essential to the American - whether he was traveling in a covered wagon or a station wagon.

And I don't think there is any question that the Federal Highway Program as it has developed over the years since 1916, and particularly over the last ten years, must rank as the great public works project of this nation.

Without the great highway network that Program helped build, the unparalleled prosperity we enjoy today would surely be beyond our reach. Millions of Americans would not know the opportunities those highways have opened up - in all spheres of human experience and endeavor, personal, social, economic, cultural, recreational.

Yet we are discovering that where once the highway could only help it now has the capacity to hurt. Where once they were only avenues to growth, they now can be obstacles to growth. And the reason is that the wide open spaces, which disappeared for most Americans a generation ago, are now being denied to highways as well. A two-lane road rolling through vast and relatively open rural countryside was one thing. A freeway trying to roar through thickly populated metropolitan neighborhoods and communities - that is another thing altogether.

Some two-thirds of the Federal Interstate System is completed. About one-half of the scheduled 6,000 metropolitan miles of that system remains unbuilt. And in city after city, progress toward building the remaining miles has either slowed to a rush hour crawl, or come to a complete stop.

The last miles are indeed proving to be the longest.

Let's look at some of the reasons.

Senator Jennings Randolph summed them up well when he said" "The highway is a catalyst, changing all it touches. This is true in rural America as well as in urban America, but the urban highway, by reason of the density of the population and the concentration of economic and social values, has a far greater effect on the environment of the city."

San Francisco, Seattle, San Antonio, New Orleans, Atlanta, St. Paul, Milwaukee, Chicago, Indianapolis, Cleveland, the District of Columbia, Philadelphia, New York City, Boston - this is but a selective roll call of major cities across the country still bearing the bruises from bitter freeway fights.

San Francisco has turned down two major freeways - and a quarter of a billion dollars or more of Federal matching money that would have come with them.

It's getting to the point where it's almost as hard to get an urban freeway through as it is a rapid transit bond issue.

It is no longer simply a question of a few stubborn individuals lying down in front of bulldozers or tying themselves to trees.

The people holding up the completion of our urban freeway program represent a very substantial cross-section of the urban leadership community - including mayors and city managers.

Let me cite, for example, two views of urban highways.

The first reads: "Take the federal highway program. No one seriously questions the nation's need for good roads, but a lot of people are beginning to wonder whether that need always has to override everything else.

"The doubters have become numerous as freeways multiply in metropolitan areas, displacing families, schools and businesses, destroying scenic areas and drawing an ever-increasing flow of cars into already over-crowded city centers. Yet the planners by and large push full-speed ahead, insisting on the route that's best - for the road, if not for the communtiy."

The second reads: "...proper freeway planning is critical to our daily way of life. We have had more than two decades of urban freeway building experience with much success - yet, unfortunately, with some bitter results. I do not wonder that cities such as San Francisco or Seattle are ready to give up on any further freeway construction....

"...State planners go too far in preliminary work and route selection before consulting experts of whatever urban area in which a freeway is to be built. State personnel consider the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and therefore assume the shortest (thus least expensive) route is the best. This is not so.

"That principle of route selection may be ideal for rural communities, but it can be, and has been, grossly short-sighted in pushing new freeways through densely populated areas."

The first comment was from the Wall Street Journal. The second was by the Mayor of Los Angeles, Sam Yorty.

The moral is clear. If we don't include the total needs and desires of our cities in planning urban highways - and not just the needs of the highway user in the narrow sense of the word - then let there be no mistake: Our cities are going to find it increasingly difficult to let the highways through.

I am convinced that, in the long run, the highway industry and the highway program will flourish to the extent to which they meet the total needs of our society - not as narrowly conceived by any special interest, but as broadly conceived by the citizenry.

In urban areas - where most Americans live, and where transportation problems most demand and defy solution - that means several things:

First, each urban area itself must decide what kind of transportation system best serves and suits its particular needs.

Second, any assessment of the role of any segment of our urban systems must be made in the context of the system as a whole.

Third, and most important, we cannot make decisions on urban transportation systems without giving first and full consideration to the impact those systems will have on the total human environment in which they must operate.

The fact is that in today's world - even more in tomorrow's - any urban transportation device <u>designed to do no more</u> than move people and products from place to place is a failure, no matter how magnificently it performs that function. Because if that is all it was designed to do, it will inevitably do a lot of other things it was not designed to avoid - make too much noise, pollute the air, divide neighborhoods.

What I'm saying is very simple: cities are for people, and so are transportation systems.

The problems freeways are running into in our cities are not entirely of their own making.

They do not arise from any deep-seated resentment of the highway or the automobile. That combination has given the people of this country unparalleled freedom, comfort and convenience of travel and, with proper planning, will continue to do so.

They arise, in part, from a changing set of values and conditions. We are now an urban society. Seventy percent of our people live in or around cities. And there is a growing realization that these are the only cities we have and we should be handling them with care. So we are becoming more protective of them - of the air around them, of the water supply, of the parks and especially of the neighborhoods, because the neighborhood is the heart of American life.

The answer, then, to the problems of highways in urban areas - will come not from steering on a collision course, but from making common cause - the kind of common cause that may well be underway in the city of Baltimore, to cite one example.

You are familiar, I know, with how Baltimore has for years been embroiled in a bitter struggle over the city's 21-mile share of the Federal Interstate Highway System. The issues were the usual ones: some of the city's most historic sections were threatened as well as at least one comfortable stable neighborhood.

Last year, the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore came to the Department of Transportation and asked us to finance a new approach to breaking the impasse. The approach involved the creation of a so-called design concept team that would bring to bear upon the city's highway problems the combined talents of the social as well as the highway engineers, the urban as well as the highway designers, the urban as well as the highway interests.

It is still too early to speculate about what the final results of this effort will be. It does operate under certain restrictions and handicaps - stemming mainly from the fact that the design team was set up rather late in the game, after the routes, for example, were already established; and from the fact that the team is not looking at the freeway problem in relation to any other alternatives, such as mass transit.

But thus far - despite these handicaps - the indications are extremely encouraging.

When the team was first formed, one planned section of the freeway - that would have run right through a neighborhood, cutting it in two and eliminating a substantial number of homes and jobs - was regarded as unchangeable.

But as the team looked more closely at the situation, as the architects began to talk at the engineers, and the sociologists to the leaders of the community - as everybody began to talk to everybody else - they began to be aware that there were indeed alternative routes and alternative designs. They began to be aware that by talking with each other and with the leaders of the community they could discover possibilities - and problems - they had not seen before. And in the process they could see the freeway becoming, more and more, not simply a means of moving automobles and trucks and buses, but as an occasion and an instrument for improving and enhancing the life of an entire neighborhood.

I do not - as I have said - know what the results of this effort will be. But I am convinced that it is only from efforts such as this, in cities across the country, that we can arrive at acceptable solutions to our urban transportation problems.

Let me be absolutely clear on one point: the approach I suggest will cost more money. The planning and analysis being done by the concept team in Baltimore will add between one and one-and-a-half percent to the total cost of the segment of the freeway that is under review.

But let me also point out that, in the long run, the roadblocks that major American cities seem increasingly determined to place in the path of freeways they do not want will be far more costly.

I do not know how the trade-off between the brief pause for more intensive planning and the long delay caused by bitter argument over route and design would work out in every case.

I do know that the cost of freeway construction has been going up under the pressure of rising prices of materials at a steady rate of 3 percent a year.

So it would seem that a brief delay for planning review would cost less than a long delay for quarreling over route and design - in or out of court.

No matter which course we follow, the cost of highway construction in metropolitan areas is going to increase. Our recent highway needs study demonstrated that; the bill we send to Congress next week asking for authorization of highway funds will reflect it.

I am aware that many people believe the way out of this country's urban transportation dilemma is to raid the highway trust fund. I will say again what I have said before - the trust fund may well not produce enough money to meet all of the projected Interstate Highway needs in the United States as it is. And I will resist any effort to divert any of it to other uses.

At the same time, I will support any reasonable plan to produce a reliable flow of funds for mass transit in our cities because I believe mass transit is essential if we seriously hope to dealwith downtown congestion.

I do know that nobody is going to gain by thinking in terms of pro-highway or anti-highway - of either rail or road. It is not a question of either-or - it is a question of both-and as well as a question of what proportion.

We are going to have to face the fact that transportation is one of the great choice mechanisms of our society. In the past we have, in effect, exercised that choice without really knowing it - buying automobiles, for example, and building highways without being fully aware of the immense implications of these decisions.

For these are private decisions with immense public consequences - consequences we must not ignore.

In general, I think all of us are becoming aware of how, more and more, the choices available to each of us individually are coming to depend on the kind of environment we create for all of us together. Our ability to make any genuine individual choices at all, in fact, will depend increasingly on how sensibly we act in building our educational and health and recreational facilities; upon our transportation system; upon the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink; and upon the extent to which all of our citizens have ample incentives and opportunities for a decent education, a decent home and a decent job.

In today's world, we can isolate neither problems nor people from each other - neither private nor public decisions.

If we could see no other way, we could see by the flames that lit the skies over many American cities this month that we cannot separate the future of white America from the fate of black America.

Leveling stores and homes in the ghettos with a torch is not the answer. Nor is leveling blame. And the one sure way to fail to find the answer is to hang out signs that say, "business as usual."

Stanley Baldwin, in a moment of obvious frustration, told the House of Commons 30 years ago that "one of the weaknesses of a democracy is that until it is right up against it, it will never face the truth."

I believe that our democracy and everything for which it stands is right up against it today. But I believe also that we now have a chance to demonstrate the strength that matches Mr. Baldwin's finding of weakness. And that is that once the people of a democracy face the truth, their decisions go deep and last long.

The truth is that we have for too long expected the people in our ghettos to match the achievements of other Americans without extending to them the opportunities that the rest of us take for granted.

The truth is that this must change in order for the United States to prosper morally or materially.

It must change in the schools. It must change in the hiring halls. It must change in the way we plan transportation; a way which too often ignores the needs of the poor. It must change in such basic ways as the recognition of the rights of others - not just in court; or in a textbook on civics; but on the job and on the sidewalk.

It must be a change that goes deeper than law, although the law is an essential part of it. President Johnson has said: "Wherever the Federal government is involved, it must not be even a silent partner in perpetuating unequal treatment." That is a good place to start.

But the change I am talking about is the change that will come from facing the truth as we are facing it in this country today.

And the truth is that the source of America's strength and the basis of its power is simple human justice - man by man.

Thank you.

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