

REMARKS BY JOHN L. SWEENEY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, AT THE JIM HARE TESTIMONIAL DINNER IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN, FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 1967.

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It is great to be here this evening to renew an old friendship and to pay tribute to Michigan's Secretary of State.

I doubt that Jim Hare would remember the first time we met. Jim was on his way to becoming the Democratic Party's candidate for Secretary of State and I was an aspiring graduate student at Michigan State. That was 1954.

Governor Williams had launched an effort to determine the degree to which his program was clearly understood by the top officials of Michigan Government. As a good manager of any large endeavor, the Governor hoped that everyone in top state administration positions knew the general objectives of the Administration -- not just those that might affect his own field of activity.

Jim Hare had volunteered to direct this effort. He was then on the faculty of Wayne University. I was called in to do the paper work. I am sure Jim will remember some of the rather startling results of this effort. If there was concern that his program was not clearly understood, the Governor's worst fears were realized in the results of this study. We found that there was a surprising degree of misinformation about the program. Even more to our chagrin, we found a rather healthy undercurrent of opposition to some parts of it that were clearly understood.

I can remember interviewing one department head. To describe his vigorous opposition to a personal income tax, I believe his response was, "Don't you know that it will cost me an extra \$300 a year."

At that stage we all recognized that the income tax proposal might be in for some difficulty.

The next time I had a chance to work with Jim Hare was in the relationship of student and teacher. At that time Jim was the elected Secretary of State of Michigan and I was a member of Governor William's staff.

Jim had taken the leadership of the safety program in Michigan and his first task was to brief the Governor's Cabinet, and the Governor's staff, on what Jim thought should be done to improve highway safety. His patient lecturing to all of us about what legislative and administrative reforms were required is still clear. After he had taken

us into his camp with his sound program for speed control, driver licensing, automobile safety checks and other necessary activities, he then turned with equal patience and skill to the general public of Michigan. The educational drive that he launched was a magnificent success. Then Jim turned his talents to the task of convincing the legislature of the necessity for enacting that legislation.

The results of this long and hard effort are visible not only here in Michigan but throughout the country. This state over the last decade has compiled one of the most enviable highway safety records in the nation.

It was quite interesting to sit in Washington last year and listen to these same questions debated, for the first time on any real scale, in the Nation's Capital. It was easy to understand how fortunate Michigan was to have had Jim Hare's leadership and to have long passed beyond most of the questions that were being raised for the first time at the seat of the Nation's Government.

I have a very personal prejudice about the vitality of state government. There is a pervasive view in Washington that the states are a massive anachronism within our governmental system. The cliches ring loud and clear -- ranging from a description of the states as "vestigial organs on the body politic" to "barnacles on the ship of state." Yet it took us 12 years to catch up with what Jim Hare had lead Michigan to in the field of traffic safety.

I for one was overjoyed that the President appointed the Secretary of State to his Highway Safety Advisory Committee. Jim will be with us in Washington on a regular basis to tell us how to go about the job of accomplishing nationally what he has been responsible for in Michigan.

Most people are still rather unclear about what the new Department of Transportation really is -- what is its major goal and what it can mean to them. I will try to tell you briefly tonight what we think are some of the answers to those questions and try to relate this new Cabinet agency to the affairs of Michigan. We certainly understand clearly what the affairs of Michigan can mean in Washington.

The idea of a Department of Transportation was first proposed in 1874. During the ensuing 93 years, the United States enjoyed the distinction of being perhaps the only major nation in the world which did not have a Cabinet level unit handling transportation matters.

Prior to April 1, the transportation functions of the Federal Government were distributed throughout 7 major agencies, represented in 30 separate offices or bureaus.

This dispersed Federal involvement in transportation was further complicated by the unique private character of the American transportation system. With the exception of some major rapid transit operations, the American transportation system is less involved with Government than any other in the world; it is controlled almost in its entirety by private investors and managers.

It is the private sector of the American society that operates the railroad and the airlines. This is virtually unheard of in the rest of the world. The trucks are controlled by private enterprise, our cars are manufactured by private industry and I challenge anyone to come up with the equal of the American driver when it comes to free enterprise.

There is little doubt that the freedom of choice which characterizes our transportation system has greatly increased the mobility of the average American. While Robert Louis Stevenson was describing himself, he could not have more accurately predicted the attitude of most modern Americans when he said, "For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move." This penchant for mobility has resulted in, over the past two decades, what can accurately be termed as a transportation explosion in the United States. Shortly after the conclusion of World War II there were 30 million motor vehicles traveling our major highways. That figure has now tripled to more than 90 million and it will again increase by almost one-half in the next 8 years to 120 million motor vehicles.

Twenty years ago, commercial airlines flew what then seemed the astonishing total of 200 million miles. Last year they flew one billion miles. During that same period the number of private and commercial aircraft almost tripled. The manufacturing of transportation equipment has now reached a dollar total of \$4.5 billion -- a total three times larger than 20 years ago; and today one out of every five persons in the United States can trace their livelihood to transportation either directly or indirectly.

American technology has been the instrument by which Americans have been able to fulfill their desire for mobility. But we have not even glimpsed what the technology of transportation's future can mean.

At a recent science symposium in Washington, one of the major findings was that, between 1750 and 1900, the total sum of man's scientific knowledge doubled. It doubled again between 1900 and 1950 and most startling of all, it then doubled once more between 1950 and 1960.

Without question this explosive thrust of the human mind will be profoundly evident in the technology of transportation. I think we have almost no need to fear the future productiveness of our engineers and scientists. The real question is: will this society control the new technology of the future as we have not controlled the technology of the past?

There is little need for me to catalog for you the blunders that have been committed in the name of transportation. They have been the result of a basic misconception about transportation -- that it was an end in itself rather than a means to much greater ends.

We have tended to think of transportation solely in economic terms. How could automobiles be manufactured at the least possible cost? How could a highway be constructed so as to provide the shortest travel time at the lowest price? Where could one locate an airport so that it would serve the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time, again at the least possible cost?

The results of these myopic inquiries are immediately apparent, particularly in our large urban centers. We have created a mass form of transportation through mass-produced automobiles. Yet each year we kill enough people to populate the city of Battle Creek and injure more than presently live within the city limits of Detroit -- all with automobiles.

In the name of fast commuting, we pollute the air of most of the major cities of the country with exhaust fumes and in that same name we have displaced thousands of low-income families to make way for the freeways.

The list of similar errors is endless.

What is most startling about this seemingly senseless performance is -- no one is at fault but rather everyone is to blame. There is no reason why our transportation system should not be just as much of an instrument of social progress as our systems of education and health care.

We do have in this democracy both the intelligence and the will to insure that our great transportation system will serve our social as well as economic future. The major goal of the new Department of

Transportation will be to provide some leadership in that undertaking. The new Department has some powerful weapons to assist it in that task.

It is responsible for the construction of the Federal Interstate Highway system. When completed, this network of safe, high-speed arteries will tie together every state in the nation. Those of us watching its construction from Washington could only wish that other states had moved to completion at the pace Michigan has. We will be charged with the task of suggesting what the next phase in Federal highway effort shall be and I assure you it will be looked at in light of the needs described above.

Within a few short months one of the most exciting events in the transportation field will take place -- the inauguration of high-speed rail service along the entire corridor from Boston to Washington. This experiment, if successful, can have major impact on the problems facing our major cities. High-speed rail transportation, at low cost, in our metropolitan areas can bring about far more than just an easier day's commute from suburb to downtown office and back.

One of the major causes for the Watts riot in Los Angeles, according to the McCone Commission, was the lack of public transportation from the Watts area to the major centers of employment in the metropolitan area. This is dismaying in a city where 60 percent of the land has been taken up for either streets or parking.

The new Department will play a major role in the development of aviation safety in the future. It is charged with the establishment of safety procedures for all forms of aviation and it undoubtedly will continue to play a major role in airport location and construction. Except for those who live in the vicinity of the Metropolitan Airport, aircraft noise is not a problem for most Detroiters. But in other major cities of the United States, it constitutes a major problem. Airplanes coming in for landings in New York or Washington or Chicago or San Francisco, and in other major communities, fly in low over large concentrations of people. Given the normal din of city life, the increment of a whining jet engine can make life almost unbearable. This new Department has the responsibility for developing a program that will lead to the solution of this problem.

Woven through each Departmental area of responsibility, auto, rail and aircraft, will be our interest in transportation safety.

No one has yet devised a way to engineer out of a transportation vehicle the factors of human negligence and in some cases incompetence. But there is no excuse for not taking advantage of every technological innovation that can make travel safer.

There is little question that this exploitation of new safety technology requires a deep involvement of government. Such technological developments are expensive. Private managers of transportation will voluntarily undertake their use in many instances, but a competitive market can retard total implementation.

Government requirements serve to remove the competitive factor from safety practices. The growth of the Government's concern for transportation safety has been in geometric increments. We started slowly in railroad safety under the Interstate Commerce Commission. We have slowly built up, from the middle 1930's, Government participation in truck safety. Next came a slow but steady increase in Government efforts at a safer air transportation system. We have now reached the stage where the Government controls absolutely the safety requirements for aircraft. And it was just last year the Federal Government, following the lead of progressive states, ventured into the field of automobile safety.

This latest move by the Government has obviously been of major importance to Michigan. Quite obviously the state that put America on wheels has a vital concern with anything that affects automobiles.

There has been, to say the least, significant press attention recently paid to the arduous labors of the Traffic Safety Bureau of the Department of Transportation. I doubt if there are many names of Washingtonians that are as well recognized in Michigan as that of Bill Haddon. But it is important to make several clear and concise factual observations: (1) We in the Department of Transportation, along with everyone else, want to see the safest car possible available for every American. (2) We want to see this happen without a disruption of automobile manufacturing that can cause great economic hardship for hundreds of thousands of American workers. (3) The new standards issued by Dr. Haddon's office will realize both of those goals. (4) Other standards will be issued at a subsequent date that will provide for an even safer automobile.

That is just about as good a statement as can be made when Government plays the middle role in any controversial situation. But they are facts, and while they might not be as good as some would like to hear, that also is generally the case when Governments acts are reviewed.

This question of automobile safety will continue to generate substantial furor in the years to come. I hope it can be clearly recognized that we will never devise a program that will satisfy all interested parties.

All we can do is seek the very best policies consistent with both safety and the economic realities of auto production.

There are many of you in this room who will be able to assist us in that undertaking and I am hopeful we will have the opportunity to discuss these questions face to face.

I think I have taken enough of your time this evening. Many of you have come a long distance to honor Jim Hare. Many of you will be driving back this evening. Both my wife and I are looking forward to the drive this evening to Lansing where we will have the chance to see many old friends during the remainder of the weekend.

I will close by saying to you, Mr. Secretary of State, I am grateful that your friends asked me to come this evening. I know I speak for everyone here when I thank you for the great leadership you have given to the people of this state in making its highways so much safer. Now come tell us how to do it in the rest of the country.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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SPEECH BY JOHN L. SWEENEY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS,
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, BEFORE THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF
MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA, AT CHARLESTON, SOUTH
CAROLINA ON MAY 1, 1967.

It is a pleasure for me to be back in South Carolina again. As you know, your state and many of the cities represented here tonight have been vigorous participants in the Appalachian program. It was my honor to head the Federal effort in that undertaking. One of the great experiences I had was working with your Governor and representatives of cities and counties to insure a successful Appalachian program in South Carolina.

While praise is due to many in this state for the progress that has been made in this Federal-State experiment, I wanted to pay particular tribute to your Governor, Bob McNair. I know of no Governor in the Appalachian Region who has devoted so much time and attention to proving that state government can make the hard decisions that must be made if we are to make the federal system in this country work as it should.

Some of you may think it strange that a Federal official will talk to leaders of local government about the necessity for revitalizing the states. Some of you in this room may indeed welcome the idea of direct relationship between Washington and the local communities when major decisions must be made and when large amounts of money are to be spent. But it has been my experience as an assistant to a Governor,

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an assistant to a U. S. Senator and as a Federal official that the Federal Government is almost too big to be able to make wise decisions based on local or regional requirements. This has lead me to the conclusion that it is to the state that we must turn for judgments that can reflect both local needs and local potential.

That was why such heavy decision-making authority was entrusted to the states under the Appalachian program and I could not be more grateful to Governor McNair who proved that trust correct and productive.

Leaving the Appalachian program was sad for me. The only thing that could have attracted me away was the challenge and excitement of this new Department of Transportation.

Most people are still rather unclear about what the new Department of Transportation really is -- what is its major goal and what it can mean to them. I will try to tell you briefly tonight what we think are some of the answers to those questions.

The idea of a Department of Transportation was first proposed in 1874. During the ensuing 93 years, the United States enjoyed the distinction of being perhaps the only major nation in the world which did not have a Cabinet level unit handling transportation matters.

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American technology has been the instrument by which Americans have been able to fulfill their desire for mobility. But we have not even glimpsed what the technology of transportation's future can mean. At a recent science symposium in Washington, one of the major findings was that, between 1750 and 1900, the total sum of man's scientific knowledge doubled. It doubled again between 1900 and 1950 and most startling of all, it then doubled once more between 1950 and 1960.

Without question this explosive thrust of the human mind will be profoundly evident in the technology of transportation. I think we have almost no need to fear the future productivity of our engineers and scientists. The real question is: will this society control the new technology of the future as we have not controlled the technology of the past?

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How could a highway be constructed so as to provide the shortest travel time at the lowest price? Where could one locate an airport so that it would serve the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time, again at the least possible cost?

The results of these short-sighted inquiries are immediately apparent, particularly in our towns and cities. We have created a mass form of transportation through mass-produced automobiles. Yet each year we kill enough people to more than populate the City of Spartanburg and injure more than presently live within the city limits of Detroit -- all with automobiles.

In the name of fast commuting, we pollute the air of most of the major cities of the country with exhaust fumes and in that same name we have displaced thousands of low-income families to make way for the freeways. The list of similar errors is endless.

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The latest move by the Government has obviously been of major importance to the nation.

There has been, to say the least, significant press attention recently paid to the labors of the Traffic Safety Bureau of the Department of Transportation. I doubt if there are many names of Washingtonians that are as well recognized in the country as that of Bill Haddon who heads that agency.

I will not, in these concluding remarks, go on the offensive or the defensive for Bill Haddon. But it is important to make several clear and concise factual observations: (1) We in the Department of Transportation, along with everyone else, want to see the safest car possible available for every American. (2) We want to see this happen without a disruption of automobile manufacturing that can cause great economic hardship for hundreds of thousands of American workers.

(3) The new standards issued by Dr. Haddon's office will realize both of those goals. (4) Other standards will be issued at a subsequent date that will provide for an even safer automobile.

This question of automobile safety will continue to generate substantial furor in the years to come. I hope it can be clearly recognized that we will never devise a program that will satisfy all interested parties.

That represents a brief summary of the responsibilities that have been given to the Department of Transportation. But a list of what will be done is sometimes not as important as how it will be done.

Under the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, we have established an Office of Intergovernmental Liaison. It will have two divisions: one will be responsible for liaison with state government and one will oversee our relationships with local government.

We do not regard ourselves as a font of all wisdom. As a matter of fact, we know a great deal less about how to solve a given problem in a given area than do the people who provide local leadership. That is why we have established this liaison operation.

While we will do a great deal of our work, in this endeavor, with the organizations in Washington which represent the states and local communities, we also intend to work directly with a given state or local community when the occasion demands. The door is open and we hope that you can let us know when some activity of the Department causes a problem or when you have an idea as to how we can do things better.

I doubt that we will end up on the same side on all issues but there is no question in my mind that the chances of agreement will be far better as long as there is adequate communication.

With that thought firmly in mind, I will close with the hope that we have an opportunity to meet again when items of mutual interest are before us. I thank you for this opportunity to come to South Carolina again.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY JOHN L. SWEENEY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE THE TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE OF THE ENGINEERING SOCIETY OF DETROIT, DETROIT, MICHIGAN, SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1967, 12:30 P.M.

When your chairman originally contacted me about this conference, he said: "We are looking to you for remarks that would not only challenge but stimulate our technical audience." Faced with that awesome directive I sought to invoke the words or deeds of some great and appropriate geniuses -- Leonardo Da Vinci who invented the helicopter and the Mona Lisa; Walter Hunt who invented the safety pin; Frederick Winthrop Thayer who created the baseball catcher's mask; and Thomas Edison who invented almost everything else.

I decided that the choice must be President Lyndon Johnson who created the Department of Transportation. This is to take nothing away from the magnitude of Mr. Hunt's safety pin but, in all honesty, Mr. Johnson's creation has brought together much more in one place, provided more security, promoted more safety, and hopefully will prevent as much potential embarrassment.

As the President said when he first proposed the new Department to the Congress:

"Modern transportation can be the rapid conduit of economic growth - or a bottleneck. It can bring jobs and loved ones and recreation closer to every family - or it can bring instead sudden and purposeless death. It can improve every man's standard of living - or multiply the cost of all he buys. It can be a convenience, a pleasure, the passport to new horizons of the mind and spirit - or it can frustrate and impede and delay. The choice is ours to make."

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It is that choice that I want to talk to you about today.

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We do have in this democracy both the intelligence and the will to insure that our great transportation system will serve our social as well as economic future. The major goal of the new Department of Transportation will be to provide some leadership in that undertaking.

In vigorously pursuing what we believe to be our mission, we are inevitably going to stir up controversy. One of our major hopes is that it will be constructive controversy.

I particularly hope that in such controversy critics and opponents as well as supporters do not resort to the jargon and restrictions of "simple-think." All too often we hear about the narrow interests of the engineer, or the blue sky unreality of the sociologist and planner. I think it is especially laudatory that this conference is sponsored by engineers. An effective engineer is one who is part planner and sociologist and an effective sociologist and planner is one who is part engineer. I hope the days when the engineer is regarded only as a nuts and bolts efficiency expert are gone forever. The engineer, as you have demonstrated here, has a deep and full awareness of the social problems that are inevitably related to his product and its use.

The recognition of this is going to guide the actions and policy of the Department of Transportation just as it is guiding the actions and policy of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

As long as this type of awareness prevails, much will be possible -- not only for the millions of Americans who now live in our cities, but for the even larger number of Americans who will live in the urban America of the future.