

A State Department of Transportation

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INTRODUCTION

The title "A State Department of Transportation," would possibly lead one to believe that as executive director of the Indiana State Highway Commission, I am promoting a state department of transportation. This would not be true. The fact remains that since the creation of a U. S. Department of Transportation by Congress in October 1966, seven of our sister states have created by legislation a state department of transportation. As a result, it seems to me that it behooves all of us who have any connection with the field of transportation to weigh the subject from the standpoint of its possibilities, advantages and disadvantages to the State of Indiana.

VARIOUS STATE LEGISLATURES CONSIDER A STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

During 1967, bills were presented to the state legislatures in several states to establish a state department of transportation. However, such legislation failed to be enacted in 1967 in Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Washington and West Virginia. Legislation in Illinois, Maine, Maryland and Washington provided for studies to determine the feasibility of establishing such agencies of transportation.

In Pennsylvania Governor Shafer asked the legislature to consider the establishment of a state transportation agency; but he insisted that a preliminary study be conducted to develop a plan for its organization.

This means that at least 12 states—other than California, New York, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Florida, and Hawaii, who have such a state agency—at least considered this to be a timely subject. In total, some 19 states during the past year considered such a state department.

EARLY THOUGHTS AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

At the federal level the creation of a department of transportation was developed from the basic thought of coordinating all forms of transportation—land, sea and air.

Some have said that a new era in road and bridge building is in the making.

When Congress was working with the creation of such an agency many statements were made concerning transportation of both the past and present. Here are some of those statements:

1. "America today lacks a coordinated transportation system that permits travelers and goods to move conveniently and efficiently from one means of transportation to another, using the best characteristics of each."
2. "In the past, research and development has sometimes been inconsistent and largely oriented toward the promotion of a particular means of transportation."
3. "Even by 1975 our population will climb from 200 million to 275 million."
 "The gross national product will increase by 50 percent—past the trillion dollar mark."
 "By then, we will be driving 100 million cars, trucks and buses."
 "By then, the volume of automobile traffic will be up 40 percent over what it was in 1967."
 "Commercial air traffic will have tripled, with an estimated one million people boarding an airliner in this country every day."
 Even the observation of Satchel Paige was quoted: 'Never look back, they may be gaining on you.'
4. Another adage that was recited is that "The vehicles we use for transportation are about what the football is to the professional leagues—the least expensive and least complicated part of the operation."

CENTRALIZATION WITH STATE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION

In looking at the example of some of the states who have created a state department of transportation, it appears from an administrative standpoint that it is an operation of centralizations rather than decentralization.

New York

New York, for example, in their policy statement declared that adequate, safe and efficient transportation facilities and services at reasonable costs to the public are essential to the economic growth of the state and the well-being of its people and that planning and development of such facilities and services shall be coordinated by a state department of transportation with over-all responsibility for balanced transportation policy and planning.

As a result, New York's department encompasses all of the Department of Public Works, Department of Motor Vehicles, Bureau of Aviation and the Office of Transportation from the Executive Department. However, this is only a start. The new department is to submit a master plan by September 1, 1968 and to submit recommendations for revisions on a continuing basis.

Wisconsin

The state of Wisconsin created the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, with a secretary of transportation. The department includes the Division of Aeronautics, Division of Motor Vehicles, Division of Highways, Division of Business Management, and the State Division of Planning.

Naturally no two states are alike in the titles of the various divisions included in the new agency.

INDIANA'S TRANSPORTATION-ASSOCIATED DEPARTMENTS

Indiana, like the other states, has a broad field of transportation-associated departments, agencies and committees that would make the centralization of such groups seem unlimited.

In checking over the list we have the Indiana State Highway Commission, Toll Road Commission, Toll Bridge Commission, Aeronautics Commission, Bureau of Motor Vehicles, and various committees established by the legislature, such as the Highway Needs Study Committee, Statewide Transportation Committee, Land Acquisition Committee, various parkway and trail commissions, Motor Pool Section of the Department of Administration, Office of Traffic Safety, Federal Highway Safety Program, Vehicle Equipment Safety Committee, Vehicle Inspection Board, Safety Aspects of Marine Navigation, Air Flight Safety and Air Lane Congestion, City-County Traffic Safety Program Advisory Board, and Civil Air Patrol of Civil Defense. These agencies and committees represent some 9,000 full-time positions and an annual operating budget in excess of \$350 million.

All of this reminds me of a statement made by Rex M. Whitton, former BPR administrator, two years ago at the AASHO annual meeting, that the various state highway departments had seen a lot of changes during the past 50 years but he doubted if we had really seen anything yet, when the past is compared with what can be expected in the future.

Just looking back at a few of Indiana's changes from a management standpoint, we are seeing emphasis placed on methods, performance, education, planning, and programs that a few short years ago we would have considered to be in the unlikely or unnecessary category.

STATE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION TO COORDINATE AIR, SEA, AND LAND TRAVEL

In the November 30, 1967, *Roundup of Federal Highway Administration News* was an article entitled "Alan S. Boyd (Secretary of the U. S. Department of Transportation) Suggests South Carolina Create a Transportation Department."

In this report on a Columbia (S. C.) meeting, Boyd recommended that the state "consider creating its own department of transportation to develop the best possible system of getting people where they're going—quickly and safely."

The belief at the federal level apparently is that such a department can provide closer coordination among agencies concerned with air, sea, and land travel. Without this kind of close coordination it is virtually impossible to make intelligent choices among transportation alternatives to produce a balanced system.

DECISION WITH CAUTION

Even though, as stated previously, some 19 states either have at present, or have considered legislation for such a department. I am sure that each state will approach this decision with caution, many by first making a survey to determine its feasibility from an administrative and operational standpoint.

The cities, counties and state are due for many changes in administration, planning, and operations in the transportation field, as well as in the functional classification of roads and streets into arterial, collectors and local systems based upon sufficiency ratings, traffic and use.

CONCLUSION

In closing, irregardless of what has been written or said during the past two years concerning our transportation problems at the local,

state and national level, and the coordination of land, sea, and air systems, I am convinced that our success in developing a transportation system that Indiana needs now and will need in the years ahead will not come from the sudden appearance of some new technology, or from a massive outpouring of money that simply gives us more of the same, but rather from the willingness of everyone involved in the transportation industry to reason and work together. All of this makes Satchel Paige's classic warning, "Never look back, they may be gaining on you," have a special meaning for Indiana's transportation user.