

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

ANNUAL MEETING -- MINNESOTA GOOD ROADS, INC.

Ramada Inn
Arden Hills, Minnesota

October 31, 1974

The condition of our nation's rural transportation system -- if one can call it that -- is a national disgrace.

Soaring food prices at the supermarket, skyrocketing transport costs for our farmers, the abandonment of thousands of family farms, high rates of rural unemployment, and rail lines clogged with grain -- these are the symptoms of thirty years of neglect of rural transportation.

You know much better than I how the federal road dollars have been used in Minnesota. Most of the money has gone into the interstate highway system. While this is a crucially important area, it is not the only place where federal funds are desperately needed.

There is no question that much too little has gone into the roads that are the lifeline of rural America -- the secondary roads, ~~the~~ farm-to-market-roads -- that link America's consumers with its producers.

In the last five years Minnesota has received more than \$400 million in federal highway assistance. A full 70 percent of these funds has been used on the interstate system, while the remaining 30 per cent -- \$124 million -- was spread over the rest of the road system for our entire state.

When you deduct the amount used in urban areas, the reason for the crisis in rural transportation is clear -- rural Minnesota needs more federal road aid than it has been getting.

A generous estimate by the State Highway Department shows that rural areas received about \$15 million a year during the past five years. I don't have to tell you how little this amount of money buys; you know better than I do. It is far short of the amount needed to increase the load carrying capacity of thousands of miles of farm-to-market roads and rural bridges.

Several reports prepared at my request by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Senate Agriculture Committee provide the dreary facts of national rural transportation decay. Our rail and road problems in Minnesota are very similar to those throughout the nation.

At the present time, 81 percent of the nation's rural roads are either unpaved or incapable of carrying heavy loads. In Minnesota, we are slightly worse off with about 83 percent of our rural roads in this condition.

In the nation as a whole, we are still using 95 percent of the rural bridges that were built before 1935. Most of these have had no major improvements made to them for years. As a result, most of them are too weak and too narrow to serve our rural communities and farms efficiently.

And, as you all know, the rail service keeps going down hill. Since 1940, 46,000 miles of rail, mostly rural, have been abandoned by the railroads. In Minnesota, we lost nearly 10 percent of our rail mileage between 1938 and 1972. From 1960 to 1973, the Interstate Commerce Commission approved 97 percent of the railroads' requests for rail line abandonments.

Last year the rural transportation problem finally received some attention as it grew to crisis proportions. The huge new acreage put into production, the Russian grain deal, and the bumper crop of 1972 stretched and distorted our nation's entire transportation system, but disaster was avoided.

However, if we had produced the huge crop estimated by the Department of Agriculture for this year, we never would have been able to move it to market. Prices on food would have continued their upward climb here and abroad, while grain and other farm products were left to rot because of inadequate transportation.

Millions of people around the world rely on the bounty of America's farmland for their very livelihood. When we have a poor crop millions suffer from malnutrition and die of starvation. This always is a great tragedy.

How much greater a tragedy, what a national disgrace it would be, if millions suffered and died not because our farms did not produce enough, but because the United States of America -- the economic and technological superstar -- could not move its abundance from the countryside to the cities and ports.

It will be a sad day in America's history when the front pages of the eastern press finally conclude that rural transportation neglect has produced the greatest "immovable feast" in the history of the world.

The time to act to be sure this tragedy and national embarrassment does not take place is now. And here is what I think we must do.

First, we must increase federal funding for rural road and bridge improvements.

Increased truck weights and the greater reliance on trucks as more rail lines are abandoned in rural areas, make added help essential.

I have introduced legislation aimed at doing this job. S.3756, my rural roads bill, would provide an additional \$500 million this fiscal year and \$950 million next fiscal year for ongoing rural road and bridge programs.

Second, Congress should declare an immediate two-year moratorium on all rural rail abandonments, where the communities involved oppose the railroad's action.

During that two year period, a system for federal assistance to permit continued service along essential lines needs to be put in place. At the same time, a comprehensive study of the effect of branch line abandonments on the nation's economic, social, and environmental needs should be undertaken.

Senator Mondale and I have been working for over a year to get this legislative package accepted. In fact, we managed to have it passed in the Senate only to see it dropped in the Senate-House conference on the Northeast Rail Bill.

Third, this nation must have a comprehensive national transportation policy -- one that clearly reflects the ever increasing interdependence of our cities and our countryside. We cannot afford to treat our rural and urban transportation needs as separate and distinct.

We need an urban rural transportation plan for the remainder of the decade that is based on a national policy. This will have to be more than the 90-day wonder plan variety that restates the obvious. We need some crisp thinking and bold action to meet our future needs.

Fourth, public officials who understand the importance of the rural transportation crisis must do a better job of conveying the urgent need to act on it to the American people.

We have to convince leaders from urban areas that transportation does not begin and end with getting the commuter to work. He must be told that transportation begins at the commuters' breakfast table and that if we don't improve our rural system, his cereal bowl could be empty, and certainly will be much more expensive to fill.

I have a sign on my Senate office door -- some of you may have seen it -- that says: "Agriculture is as close as your next meal." We need to remind our urban friends that their next meal is as close or as far as our transportation system puts our agriculture.

Our nation cannot afford the costs in dollars, lives, and national disgrace that would come with an "immovable feast." I pledge my energy and ability to the task of seeing to it that America does not have to pay this unnecessary price.

#

- also also - President of Senate
- members of Legisl
- ed no back - Public Safety Comm
- Ray Lappagard - Commissioner
- Hi way 12

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

(X) Happy Birthday - Slim Elbert!

ANNUAL MEETING

MINNESOTA GOOD ROADS, INC.

Bot
President Lombardino

RAMADA INN

ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA

OCTOBER 31, 1974

Dont know
case

National Transportation Policy

China
L THE CONDITION OF OUR NATION'S RURAL TRANSPORTATION
SYSTEM -- IF ONE CAN CALL IT THAT -- IS A NATIONAL DISGRACE.

L SOARING FOOD PRICES AT THE SUPERMARKET, SKYROCKETING
TRANSPORT COSTS FOR OUR FARMERS, THE ABANDONMENT OF THOUSANDS
OF FAMILY FARMS, HIGH RATES OF RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT, AND RAIL
LINES CLOGGED WITH GRAIN -- THESE ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF THIRTY

YEARS OF NEGLECT OF RURAL TRANSPORTATION.

Roads + Rail!

L YOU KNOW MUCH BETTER THAN I HOW THE FEDERAL ROAD DOLLARS
HAVE BEEN USED. ~~IN MINNESOTA,~~ MOST OF THE MONEY HAS GONE INTO

THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM WHILE THIS IS A CRUCIALLY

IMPORTANT AREA, IT IS NOT THE ONLY PLACE WHERE FEDERAL FUNDS

ARE DESPERATELY NEEDED.

*(Interstate based on
Nat Security -
What about the
Secondary + Farm
to Mkt Rds*

✓ THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MUCH TOO LITTLE HAS GONE INTO
THE ROADS THAT ARE THE LIFELINE OF RURAL AMERICA -- THE SECONDARY
ROADS, THE FARM-TO-MARKET-ROADS -- THAT LINK AMERICA'S CONSUMERS
WITH ITS PRODUCERS.

✓ IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS MINNESOTA HAS RECEIVED MORE THAN
\$400 MILLION IN FEDERAL HIGHWAY ASSISTANCE ✓ A FULL 70 PERCENT
OF THESE FUNDS HAS BEEN USED ON THE INTERSTATE SYSTEM, WHILE
THE REMAINING 30 PER CENT -- \$124 MILLION -- WAS SPREAD OVER THE
REST OF THE ROAD SYSTEM FOR OUR ENTIRE STATE.

✓ WHEN YOU DEDUCT THE AMOUNT USED IN URBAN AREAS, THE REASON
FOR THE CRISIS IN RURAL TRANSPORTATION IS CLEAR -- RURAL

MINNESOTA NEEDS MORE FEDERAL ROAD AID THAN IT HAS BEEN GETTING.

(Impoundment - Delay, money costs!)

✓ A GENEROUS ESTIMATE BY THE STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT SHOWS
THAT RURAL AREAS RECEIVED ABOUT \$15 MILLION A YEAR DURING THE
PAST FIVE YEARS. ✓ I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU HOW LITTLE THIS AMOUNT
OF MONEY BUYS; YOU KNOW BETTER THAN I DO. ✓ IT IS FAR SHORT OF
THE AMOUNT NEEDED TO INCREASE THE LOAD CARRYING CAPACITY OF
THOUSANDS OF MILES OF FARM-TO-MARKET ROADS AND RURAL BRIDGES,
✓ SEVERAL REPORTS PREPARED AT MY REQUEST BY THE U. S. DEPART-
MENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE PROVIDE
THE DREARY FACTS OF NATIONAL RURAL TRANSPORTATION DECAY. ✓ OUR
RAIL AND ROAD PROBLEMS IN MINNESOTA ARE VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE
THROUGHOUT THE NATION.

L AT THE PRESENT TIME, 81 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S RURAL ROADS ARE EITHER UNPAVED OR INCAPABLE OF CARRYING HEAVY LOADS. IN MINNESOTA, WE ARE SLIGHTLY WORSE OFF WITH ABOUT 83 PERCENT OF OUR RURAL ROADS IN THIS CONDITION.

L IN THE NATION AS A WHOLE, WE ARE STILL USING 95 PERCENT OF THE RURAL BRIDGES THAT WERE BUILT BEFORE 1935. MOST OF THESE HAVE HAD NO MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS MADE TO THEM FOR YEARS. AS A RESULT, MOST OF THEM ARE TOO WEAK AND TOO NARROW TO SERVE OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES AND FARMS EFFICIENTLY.

L AND, AS YOU ALL KNOW, THE RAIL SERVICE KEEPS GOING DOWN HILL. L SINCE 1940, 46,000 MILES OF RAIL, MOSTLY RURAL, HAVE BEEN ABANDONED BY THE RAILROADS.

L IN MINNESOTA, WE LOST NEARLY 10 PERCENT OF OUR RAIL MILEAGE

BETWEEN 1938 AND 1972 FROM 1960 TO 1973, THE INTERSTATE

COMMERCE COMMISSION APPROVED 97 PERCENT OF THE RAILROADS'

REQUESTS FOR RAIL LINE ABANDONMENTS,

(Rail Road heads)
Don't own ship
like the way - Ampt

L LAST YEAR THE RURAL TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM FINALLY RECEIVED

SOME ATTENTION AS IT GREW TO CRISIS PROPORTIONS. L THE HUGE NEW

ACREAGE PUT INTO PRODUCTION, THE RUSSIAN GRAIN DEAL, AND THE

BUMPER CROP OF 1972 STRETCHED AND DISTORTED OUR NATION'S ENTIRE

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, BUT DISASTER WAS AVOIDED.

L HOWEVER, IF WE HAD PRODUCED THE HUGE CROP ESTIMATED BY

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR THIS YEAR, WE NEVER WOULD HAVE

BEEN ABLE TO MOVE IT TO MARKET.

L PRICES ON FOOD WOULD HAVE CONTINUED THEIR UPWARD CLIMB HERE

AND ABROAD, WHILE GRAIN AND OTHER FARM PRODUCTS WERE LEFT

TO ROT BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION.

L MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD RELY ON THE BOUNTY OF

AMERICA'S FARMLAND FOR THEIR VERY LIVELIHOOD. WHEN WE HAVE A

POOR CROP MILLIONS SUFFER FROM MALNUTRITION AND DIE OF

STARVATION. THIS ALWAYS IS A GREAT TRAGEDY.

L HOW MUCH GREATER A TRAGEDY, WHAT A NATIONAL DISGRACE IT

WOULD BE, IF MILLIONS SUFFERED AND DIED NOT BECAUSE OUR FARMS

DID NOT PRODUCE ENOUGH, BUT BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

-- THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL SUPERSTAR -- COULD NOT MOVE

ITS ABUNDANCE FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE TO THE CITIES AND PORTS.

L IT WILL BE A SAD DAY IN AMERICA'S HISTORY WHEN THE FRONT
PAGES OF THE EASTERN PRESS FINALLY CONCLUDE THAT RURAL TRANS-
PORTATION NEGLECT HAS PRODUCED THE GREATEST "IMMOVABLE FEAST"
IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

L THE TIME TO ACT TO BE SURE THIS TRAGEDY AND NATIONAL
EMBARRASSMENT DOES NOT TAKE PLACE IS NOW AND HERE IS WHAT I
THINK WE MUST DO.

① FIRST, WE MUST INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR RURAL ROAD
AND BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS.

L INCREASED TRUCK WEIGHTS AND THE GREATER RELIANCE ON TRUCKS
AS MORE RAIL LINES ARE ABANDONED IN RURAL AREAS, MAKE ADDED
HELP ESSENTIAL.

L I HAVE INTRODUCED LEGISLATION AIMED AT DOING THIS JOB.

S.3756, MY RURAL ROADS BILL, WOULD PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL \$500

MILLION THIS FISCAL YEAR AND \$950 MILLION NEXT FISCAL YEAR FOR

ONGOING RURAL ROAD AND BRIDGE PROGRAMS.

*(Is this inflationary?
no. Transportation
bottle necks cause
inflation)*

#2 SECOND, CONGRESS SHOULD DECLARE AN IMMEDIATE TWO-YEAR

MORATORIUM ON ALL RURAL RAIL ABANDONMENTS, WHERE THE COMMUNITIES

INVOLVED OPPOSE THE RAILROAD'S ACTION.

L DURING THAT TWO YEAR PERIOD, A SYSTEM FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

TO PERMIT CONTINUED SERVICE ALONG ESSENTIAL LINES NEEDS TO BE

PUT IN PLACE. AT THE SAME TIME, A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE

EFFECT OF BRANCH LINE ABANDONMENTS ON THE NATION'S ECONOMIC,

SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN.

L SENATOR MONDALE AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR OVER A YEAR TO
GET THIS LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE ACCEPTED. IN FACT, WE MANAGED TO
HAVE IT PASSED IN THE SENATE ONLY TO SEE IT DROPPED IN THE SENATE-
HOUSE CONFERENCE ON THE NORTHEAST RAIL BILL.

#3 L THIRD, THIS NATION MUST HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL
TRANSPORTATION POLICY -- ONE THAT CLEARLY REFLECTS THE EVER
INCREASING INTERDEPENDENCE OF OUR CITIES AND OUR COUNTRYSIDE.

{ Urban
Rural
can you
be for
both?
==

L WE CANNOT AFFORD TO TREAT OUR RURAL AND URBAN TRANSPORTATION
NEEDS AS SEPARATE AND DISTINCT. *they are interdependent.*

L WE NEED AN URBAN-RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE REMAINDER
OF THE DECADE THAT IS BASED ON A NATIONAL POLICY. THIS WILL HAVE
TO BE MORE THAN THE 90-DAY WONDER PLAN VARIETY THAT RESTATES THE
OBVIOUS.

*Rail, water, Highway, airports
(Secondary, farm to MKT)*

WE NEED SOME CRISP THINKING AND BOLD ACTION TO MEET OUR
FUTURE NEEDS.

④

FOURTH, PUBLIC OFFICIALS WHO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF
THE RURAL TRANSPORTATION CRISIS MUST DO A BETTER JOB OF CONVEYING
THE URGENT NEED TO ACT ON IT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

↳ WE HAVE TO CONVINCE LEADERS FROM URBAN AREAS THAT TRANSPOR-
TATION DOES NOT BEGIN AND END WITH GETTING THE COMMUTER TO WORK.

(mass transit - yes)

↳ HE MUST BE TOLD THAT TRANSPORTATION BEGINS AT THE COMMUTERS'

BREAKFAST TABLE AND THAT IF WE DON'T IMPROVE OUR RURAL SYSTEM,

HIS CEREAL BOWL COULD BE EMPTY, AND CERTAINLY WILL BE MUCH MORE

EXPENSIVE TO FILL.

(5) Fifth - The Requirements of National
security demand and immediate
modernization of our Railroads &
the improvement of Rural Roads.

(6.) Rural Development - Population
Decentralization - new Industries - Jobs
Depend on ⁻¹¹⁻Transportation -

I HAVE A SIGN ON MY SENATE OFFICE DOOR -- SOME OF YOU MAY
HAVE SEEN IT -- THAT SAYS: "AGRICULTURE IS AS CLOSE AS YOUR
NEXT MEAL." WE NEED TO REMIND OUR URBAN FRIENDS THAT THEIR NEXT
MEAL IS AS CLOSE OR AS FAR AS OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PUTS
OUR AGRICULTURE.

OUR NATION CANNOT AFFORD THE COSTS IN DOLLARS, LIVES, AND
NATIONAL DISGRACE THAT WOULD COME WITH AN "IMMOVABLE FEAST."

I PLEDGE MY ENERGY AND ABILITY TO THE TASK OF SEEING TO IT THAT
AMERICA DOES NOT HAVE TO PAY THIS UNNECESSARY PRICE.

~~National Security~~



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