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STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES M. MEAD TO THE SENATE:

Mr. President, as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation of the Truman Committee, I desire to file with the Senate the Report of the Truman Committee on Transportation.

The importance of transportation to the war effort cannot be over-emphasized. War materials and essential civilian goods must be transported during every stage of their development from the raw materials in the ground through manufacturing and distributing facilities to the point of final consumption.

At the beginning of the war, the United States had the finest transportation system in the world. It consisted of a vast and intricate maze of railroads, air lines, highways for trucks and busses, water routes for barges and ships, and pipelines for gas and petroleum products. Without this magnificent transportation system, it would have been impossible for us to accomplish the miracles of production that have been performed.

When the German submarines sank our ships and it became necessary to throw upon the railroads the overlaid movement of oil and other shipments theretofore carried by our coastwise and intercoastal shipping Goebbels chortled gleefully that transportation would be the Achilles heel of the United States. He knew from the bitter experience of Germany itself the tremendous burdens which war casts upon a transportation system and believed that with less railroad equipment than we had in the last war, our transportation system would not be able to survive both the shock of the interruption of our coastal traffic and the increased burdens of the war for new construction and the production of war materiel.

Goebbels was wrong. Our transportation system has carried an enormously greater amount of traffic than had ever before been thought possible. It has done this despite steadily diminishing facilities, the loss of our coastwise water routes and our sources of rubber, primarily by working harder and using equipment more efficiently. Management and labor of transportation agencies and the shippers deserve commendation.

But, the war is not over, and the volume of traffic to be handled in 1944 is expected to exceed substantially the record-breaking volume handled in 1943. In the case of many transportation services, the volume estimated for 1944 is determined not by the demand but by the estimated limit of capacity. It is vitally important that the transportation system not be permitted to break down. The results of any such break-down would be far-reaching and might be disastrous, and it would take from six months to a year or more to produce and put into operation the new facilities which would correct the break-down. For these reasons, the Committee was of the opinion that the subject of transportation required an investigation to make certain that in the press of other war activities we would not neglect our transportation facilities beyond a safe point. Locomotives, freight and passenger cars, rails, trucks, busses and tires wear out. We must be prepared either to replace them or to do without the transportation which they could provide.

The Committee has found that additional conservation of transportation is possible particularly if the public understands the seriousness of the situation and gives its wholehearted cooperation. But, by and large, the savings through further conservation of transportation facilities, although substantial, will be relatively small and not

sufficient to off-set the need for additional transportation equipment.

Just as in the case of farm equipment, investigated by the Committee in the latter part of 1942, the Committee found that the manufacture of transportation equipment was being neglected in favor of the manufacture of war materiel. To some extent this was necessary, and it was also natural because the need of war materiel is more readily apparent. The significance of transportation and maintenance of food production, even in total war, is less conspicuous.

However, the Committee is pleased to be able to report that during its investigation of transportation, many important steps have been taken to provide additional new transportation equipment. This indicates an increased appreciation of the essentiality of transportation service. Barring unforeseen developments, these steps, and others which the Committee has been assured will be taken, should avoid any break-down or substantial diminution of essential transportation. But further and constant attention should be given to the problem if we expect the transportation system to be adequate to meet all the important demands our war effort will make upon it in 1944.

The production of locomotives during the first nine months of this year was substantially below schedule, but this has been rectified. Recently, provision was made for the manufacture of additional freight cars. Still more are needed.

Practically no new trucks have been produced for our trucking industry since 1941, and the need for repair parts as vehicles wore out became very great. The Committee found that adequate supplies of parts were not being produced because of the low priority assigned to them as

compared to the priority for production of military materiel. This has now been changed, and parts for medium and heavy civilian trucks are given the same priority as parts for military trucks, although parts for light trucks and passenger cars still have an inferior priority.

Similarly, the Committee found that even the small quantities of new trucks authorized for replacement purposes were not being manufactured because of the higher priorities assigned to trucks for military use. In 1941, 576,000 new trucks were required for replacement needs alone. Only 7500 trucks were to be manufactured for civilian use during the last half of 1943, and only 19,218 during the first half of 1944. Despite these small numbers and the great need for replenishment, the Committee found that unless prompt action was taken the manufacture of the 7500 trucks for 1943 would not be completed until June, 1944 and that it was doubtful that the 19,218 trucks would be completed by the end of 1944.

At the same time, the War Department, for our Armies and those of our allies, had requested the production of 742,000 trucks in 1944 in addition to the more than 600,000 trucks estimated to be produced in 1943 for military service and the additional hundreds of thousands of military trucks produced for us and our allies in prior years.

Lend-lease had requested over 52,000 trucks and the Office of Economic Warfare asked for 15,000. The Committee called attention to the serious situation with respect to trucks for our motor transport industry and on November 2, 1943 Lend-Lease requirements were reduced by over 50%, and the Office of Economic Warfare by 36%, the War Department by 3%, and the 1944 truck production for domestic use was increased from 19,218 for the first six months to 81,000 for the entire year. Priority equal

to military production was accorded to civilian trucks. This is an improvement. Still production will not be sufficient to furnish needed replacements. The Committee does not want to take even the slightest risk of impeding the progress of the war by insisting upon the reduction of what might prove to be unnecessarily large requests by the War Department for trucks. But the Committee has pointed out to the War Department the great need for trucks in the domestic motor transport industry, which is so essential to military production. The Committee has requested that the War Department, itself, subject its new truck program to the most rigorous scrutiny. The Committee will also inquire as to the War Department's plans for improving the efficiency of utilization of the trucks it has already acquired for non-combat purposes.

Also, trucks cannot run without tires, and the situation with respect to heavy duty truck and bus tires is extremely critical. This is due to the constantly increasing requests of the War Department for new trucks and to the fact that we have not yet learned how to make heavy duty truck tires of synthetic rubber, whether rayon or cotton cord is used, equal in performance to natural rubber truck tires. This presents an additional and formidable reason for the Committee's recommendation that the War Department subject its estimates of truck requirements for 1944 to the most rigorous scrutiny.

Similarly, the air lines are suffering from lack of equipment. In May 1942, the military services acquired approximately half of the 324 planes then owned by the air lines. The air lines increased their efficiency by operating planes over 11 hours a day instead of eight and carrying loads more nearly approaching total capacity. These efficiencies

enabled the air lines in the year ending June 30, 1943, with only about 170 planes, to handle almost as many passenger miles and a far greater quantity of mail, express and excess baggage than they had handled in the preceding year with 324 planes. The airlines deserve great credit for this magnificent achievement. However, additional air transportation is needed, and the Committee has recommended to the Army and Navy that some of the planes taken from the air lines be returned to them as rapidly as possible. Up to December 1, 1943 only 20 planes had been returned to the air lines, six of which were replacements for destroyed planes. Seven additional planes are now in the process of being returned. More should be returned as soon as it is possible to do so, especially as neither the War Department nor the Navy Department can show a record of using the planes allocated to them with efficiency comparable to that of the air lines. Although this should not be the sole or controlling factor, it is very important and should be given most careful consideration before transport planes are assigned to other uses where the efficiency factor will be substantially less.

To summarize, our transportation system requires new facilities and equipment, and it is extremely important that action be taken far enough in advance to insure that the new facilities and equipment will be available when they will be required. Substantial progress has been made in this direction, especially during the last few months, but further and constant attention to the problem is required.