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THE WHITE HOUSE
EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
JOHN E. ROBSON
AT THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY
OF
JOHN E. ROBSON
AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
THE ROSE GARDEN

5:04 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Members of the Cabinet, Members of Congress, distinguished guests:

It is a great privilege and pleasure for me to participate in the swearing-in of John Robson as the Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board. It is my judgment that the American commercial airline industry is one of the very best. It has got fine people running it, managing it. It has got outstanding equipment and fine employees. It performs, in my judgment, a very useful function, a very vital part of our transportation system.

It seems to me, however, that as we try to achieve the most efficient commercial airline service in this country at the lowest possible cost, we do have to have an organization such as the CAB to look after such mundane matters as fares, routes, competition and, of course, the CAB must not neglect the environment, energy and a raft of other important matters that are in the public interest.

In John Robson I think we will have a Chairman who will do an outstanding job. His experience in the field of transportation goes back to the days when the Department of Transportation was first established, first as General Counsel and second as Under Secretary. He is an outstanding lawyer, a person who has had experience in Government, as well as in private practice.

John, it is a privilege and a pleasure for me to be here on this occasion to participate in your swearing-in, and at this point, may I ask Justice Rehnquist to actually perform the function of making you a member, first, and following that, I will designate you officially as Chairman of the CAB.

(Justice William H. Rehnquist administered the oath of office.)

MR. ROBSON: Thank you, Mr. President, thank you, Mr. Justice Rehnquist, and thank all of you distinguished Members of the Congress, my friends and others from the Government, and my family for being here with me.

Mr. President, I recall a conversation some months ago that you and I had when I remarked that I thought this was a difficult time to govern. And your response was not a sigh of resigned agreement, but was a statement that the difficult times offer the greatest opportunities for new ideas and creative action.

In the area of the responsibility that I am about to enter, new ideas and new concepts may very well be needed. I go in with an open mind and a commitment to search for new and good solutions and to implement them -- or try to implement them.

But the novelty of an idea and its merit are not always coincident. As one of your predecessors said, "New ideas can be good or bad, just like old ones."

So, I approach my new task with a sense of deliberateness, seeking to avoid, as Winston Churchill once said, a needless quarrel between the past and the future only to find that we have lost the present.

I enthusiastically accept the challenge, Mr. President. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve, and I hope that I shall always justify your confidence.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all for coming. We are very grateful. I see around here a good many old friends. It is nice to see you. I am sure this occasion will be one that will be the beginning of a new era as far as the CAB is concerned.

Congratulations again, John.

END (AT 5:10 P.M. EDT)