

The Question of Transportation

"Who will build roads?" is one question many people ask when they finally realize that Libertarians are serious when they say that Government should not engage in any business. But this question is too limited. The question should be "who will provide for transportation; i.e., the moving of people and goods from one place to another?"

The answer is: the same people who provide most of the other goods and services that one purchases - namely, the capitalists who risk their money and apply their ingenuity, and the working people who trade their labor and intelligence for purchasing power.

At present, via the highway trust fund and by Government expenditures of citizens' money at the local level, the automobile industry has been subsidized by hundreds of billions of dollars (and subsidy, of course, is a form of legalized theft). But aside from the immorality of Government subsidization, it has resulted in at least two adverse effects:

1. Heightened pollution of the air and...
2. A scarcity of alternative means of transportation.

If the citizens' money were left in their own hands, rather than being channeled (almost exclusively) into automotive transportation, people could voluntarily put their money into those transportation enterprises likely to give them the best return on their dollar (and be the most economical).

There is a difference between the "seen" and the "unseen". All can see the cancerous growth of highway systems across the land, but few can see what could have been done with the money that was forcibly taken to feed this malignancy. People earn only so much money. Every dollar forced from people for one mode of transportation means one dollar less to be used for alternatives, for example: railroads. And as for railroads, crippled by government rules and regulations and running inefficiently because of government control (or outright ownership), it is no wonder that they go into bankruptcy (e.g., Penn Central) or continually run at tremendous losses (e.g., L.I.R.R.)

The only solution to the "problem" of transportation (and the Libertarian solution) is for government to get out of transportation completely - to sell all railroads to private companies and let them operate in an open unregulated, competitive fashion, to stop building and maintaining highways, and turn the job over to the free market.

It is true that there is a transportation problem. But Government can't solve it - Government has caused it!

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