

IV. OTHER ISSUES

A. OBSERVER STATUS AND CONSULTATIONS

To date, the major players in bilateral air negotiations have always been government officials and the airlines. It has been very much a closed shop without any formal consultative process or, indeed, much public participation. Furthermore, a perception has developed that, in the final analysis, carrier interests have taken priority over those of the travelling public and the communities.

A good number of witnesses who applauded the government's initiative to hold hearings said that, while this was a good start, there should be continuing involvement and participation. They suggested that this could be assured by giving observer status at the negotiations to appropriately nominated or designated persons. Some went so far as to urge that such person(s) should become a member of the negotiating team.

We recognize that the negotiating team cannot be too large and that too many observers would render it unwieldy and unmanageable. We understand that, in the past, our two national airlines have had observer status at all bilateral air negotiations. We would like to see this policy continued for these negotiations and believe that reasonable observer status accreditation should also be extended to other stakeholders. It should be noted that it has been a longstanding policy of the United States to grant observer status not only to airlines, but also to community and labour organizations.

It was brought to the attention of the Committee that major airport communities have formed an organization called The Association of Canadian Airport Communities. We think a representative of that association should have observer status at these negotiations. Therefore, we recommend:

- 18. That the government grant observer status to a representative of The Association of Canadian Airport Communities for the upcoming Canada-U.S. air negotiations.**

Representatives from airline labour organizations urged the Committee to support observer status for a representative of their organizations. Although we recognized that there must be limitations on the size of the negotiating team, we feel that, because of the significance of these negotiations and the potential impact on the Canadian airline industry, labour should be represented at the negotiations. Therefore, we recommend:

- 19. That the government grant observer status to one labour representative, to be designated by the labour organizations involved, for the upcoming Canada-U.S. air negotiations.**