

Recommendations

1. The Committee recommends that a special joint committee of both Houses of Parliament be created for the purpose of analyzing the contemporary and future options for passenger transportation services in Canada for the current and following decade. This study should be comprehensive and include an examination of all modes of passenger transportation. This special joint committee should have as its primary objective the presentation of recommendations that will ensure viable, economical, efficient and convenient passenger services for Canadians in all regions of the country.

2. The Committee recommends that any future decisions on passenger rail service reorganization or rationalization that involve route or service cancellations, abandonments or reductions be preceded by open and representative public hearings so that all parties concerned will have an opportunity to state their views. Furthermore, such hearings should not come to be regarded as mere formalities, but rather should be seen as an integral and indispensable part of the decision-making process. Consequently, the Committee also recommends that s. 64(1) of the *National Transportation Act* be amended, or its application be restricted by amendments to other sections of the Act to ensure it will not be used to make major reductions in passenger service without proper recourse to the Canadian Transport Commission or to Parliament.

3. The Committee recommends that an enactment providing a clear and all-encompassing legislative framework for VIA Rail Canada Inc., and in consequence for passenger rail service in this country, is an essential requirement. A good deal of delay has already taken place since the initial incorporation of the company. Time now should be regarded as of the essence and the Committee earnestly recommends the introduction of such legislation at the earliest possible date. The Committee recommends that such legislation specify the right of VIA to relevant costing data, and should specify the methods to be employed in order to obtain the necessary information either from the railways directly or through the Canadian Transport Commission. The Committee also recommends that the appropriate officials of VIA be fully consulted in the course of drafting the legislation.

4. The Committee recommends that future contractual agreements between VIA and CP Rail and CN Rail incorporate a fixed charge for each service provided and eliminate post year-end billing except for cases of demonstrable errors or oversights as found and authorized by a CTC audit.

5. The Committee recommends that the CTC audit of charges to VIA be conducted more expeditiously. If necessary in order to shorten the current unacceptably long delays in the CTC's auditing procedure, additional qualified staff should be engaged.

6. The Committee recommends that the Canadian Transport Commission commence forthwith a detailed review of Costing Order R-6313 to determine its suitability given the