

The evidence of witnesses choosing to address transportation issues provided broad support for the position succinctly stated by a representative of the Senior Citizens Action Now Association Inc. (Saskatchewan): "The fact that older people with some of the handicaps of age are not able to use the public transportation system [does not seem to be] considered important."²⁶ An elderly witness commented: "The main thing I want to say about public transportation is that it is for the swift of foot. Anybody whose mobility is compromised temporarily or permanently in any way is going to have an awfully hard time using the bus or the Metro" (20:8).

The Committee was informed that adapted transport, where it exists at all, is designed for the handicapped rather than those among the elderly who are infirm, and that lack of transport leads directly to isolation and declines in health. Research made available by one witness, concerning a major urban area, supported this contention with a finding that 40% of medical and medically-related appointments for the elderly are routinely cancelled because of lack of transportation.²⁷

In hearing testimony on housing and transportation issues, it became apparent to the Committee that many elderly Canadians, while aware that jurisdictional problems can impede the ability of the federal government (or, for that matter, provincial governments) to act on specific problems, nevertheless share the conviction that ways can be found to expedite action when a sufficiently high priority is attached to it. There is a clear probability that perceived inaction by the federal government on the priority issues of the elderly in areas such as housing and transportation will be seen as a sign of indifference, even where jurisdictional considerations impede action. Indifference, as the comment at the outset of this section suggests, is in turn seen by many as a sign of negative attitudes towards the elderly. **The Committee therefore recommends that a concerted attempt be made, by appropriate federal departments and agencies, to explore the scope of possible federal involvement in such areas as the provision of low-cost housing adapted to the elderly, and the extension and/or appropriate adaptation of existing public transport systems to those among the elderly who are disabled or infirm (Recommendation 13).** Elderly Canadians view these as priority issues. They seek either action or a convincing explanation of its absence.

3. Pensions and Financial Services

Witnesses addressing pension issues primarily stressed the vital importance, to many elderly Canadians, that pension levels sustain an