

The Disabled Persons Unit of Transport Canada is also responsible for the Advisory Committee to the Minister on Accessible Transportation.

## B. THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

Following the announcement of the National Strategy on 6 September 1991, the government agreed to give the National Transportation Agency (NTA) additional resources to help develop and to put in place regulations that address the issue of accessibility to transportation services. The new resources amounted to \$0.9 million.

When the first two sets of regulations authorized by the 1988 amendments to the *National Transportation Act* were published for comment in March 1992, the NTA stated in its press release that this was part of the "accelerated" regulatory program made possible by the Agency's participation in the Strategy.

## C. ACCOUNTABILITY

In the other reports that this Committee has tabled in Parliament, we have constantly repeated that coordination and accountability must form part of the National Strategy. In our report, *A Consensus for Action*, we stated that "the history of the recommendations of parliamentary committees concerned with disability have shown us that what is needed now is more muscle at the centre of government. . . disabled persons' units, directorates and secretariats appear to function on the margin of their respective departments. In short, they are not effectively integrated into the central decision-making process of government."<sup>3</sup> Most recently, in our report on Aboriginal people with disabilities, we pointed out that "any comprehensive policy framework in the area of disability. . . remains incomplete if it does not include some measure of accountability as well as some monitoring mechanism. Citizens should know that their concerns are being appropriately considered and integrated into the overall policy and program development of all government departments. They also have a right to know how the money that is spent either through normal government programming or through the National Strategy is providing direct benefits to them."<sup>4</sup>

This Committee believes that the concept of accountability must apply to the Department of Transport and the National Transportation Agency, as well as the other government departments and agencies that participate in the National Strategy or that, like Treasury Board, exercise powers within their mandate that affect the functioning of the National Strategy. In its study, *Disability and Transportation in Canada*, the Hickling Corporation found that, despite the initiatives undertaken by Transport Canada and the National Transportation Agency related to the National Strategy, "transportation services under federal jurisdiction are still largely inaccessible today. . . Due to the variety of 'players in the game' (including federal departments and operators), federal policy has continued to remain unfocused, at least until recent announcements" (p. 28).

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<sup>3</sup> *A Consensus for Action*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>4</sup> Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons, *Completing the Circle: A Report on Aboriginal People with Disabilities*, May 1993, pp. 24-26.