

budget for new equipment. Undoubtedly, when selecting routes to be eliminated and services to be reduced, and when assessing the factors relevant to the decision to procure funds in this fashion, various statistical and other data was considered. In the course of its proceedings, the Committee has noted that there have been considerable disagreements as to the interpretation of the data on which decisions were presumably based.

For example, the ability of Transport Canada, the CTC, and the railways to isolate load factors and occupancy rates on particular portions of some of the abandoned routes was subject to question. Indeed, there was considerable discussion as to what the actual use of the terms "load factor", "occupancy rate", and "ridership" actually meant in terms of decision-making. The confusion as to the use of these terms, their applicability, and proper analysis of the data available causes the Committee some disquiet.

The Committee also notes with interest the inconsistency in the evidence as to ridership growth on passenger trains. An expert on American passenger rail service in testimony before this Committee, stated that Amtrak ridership had increased in 1981 despite declines in all other modes of passenger carriage. This appears to be in contrast to the general impression in Canada, as became evident in some of the testimony before the Committee, that passenger train use is steadily and inexorably declining in all developed countries. The Committee believes a careful re-examination of the data is necessary.

The Committee is of the view that when drastic action is taken, such as was implemented last autumn, that involves very substantial service reductions, the operational data available and considered by those in positions of authority, should be impeccable. Once a rail service is abandoned, it is rarely, if ever, reinstated. Consequently, utmost care should be taken in evaluating the available data in deciding what action is to be taken with respect to a particular route or network and every effort should be made to ensure that the data itself is sufficient and reliable.

10. The Committee recommends that the data used as a partial basis for the decision taken in last autumn's route abandonments should be re-examined in great detail in order to determine if all the facts were available and properly interpreted. This examination should be undertaken by the Railway Transport Committee of the CTC and the results of the investigation should be made public at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that, in future, relevant information concerning particular routes that might become the subject of possible abandonment or service reductions be the object of informed public discussion prior to a decision being taken.

(ii) Effect of Route Abandonments on Passenger Rail Service Generally

The elimination of selected routes as a result of the decision by the Governor in Council of last fall, resulted in a substantial number of Canadians being without rail service. In addition and perhaps of equal importance, is the fact that many points within Canada are now accessible by rail only after tedious, inconvenient, and expensive detours. Substantial increases in travel time between points previously served are now a reality for train users.

Undoubtedly, it is the essence of a continued and vital passenger rail service in the future that it be heavily utilized by the travelling public. One of the principal arguments in