

. . . in order to reduce energy consumption and therefore contain the problem of global warming, it is necessary not to deal only with the technical aspects of transportation but perhaps more importantly to look at the people issues, that is, attitudes.⁹²

Prime among these attitudes is the North American preference for the family car, which offers personal freedom and usually quick and convenient transportation. This personal preference by the majority of the population is reflected in the political decision to spend a large share of tax revenues on highway maintenance and construction. Improvements to the road system seldom improve movement by bicycle or foot. Darrell Richards asserts that:

. . . we must cause a modal shift from the automobile to walking, cycling, urban transit, train and bus. And we must get at those cultural attitudes that are being translated into government policies that are preventing people from having equitable facilities for cycling, walking, transit, train and bus.⁹³

According to Darrell Richards the most important first step to enable this modal shift is to provide people a network. Just as there are highway networks to speed motorists from one destination to another, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders need their own safe, convenient, and largely dedicated networks. The first step toward this goal is the redirection of tax revenues and the development of a tax system more equitable to people who walk, bicycle or take transit to work. This need to redirect tax revenues was expressed by two other witnesses. Janine Ferretti identified the allocation of tax dollars to the government's new program to upgrade Canadian highways and airports as a form of subsidy that contributes to the deterioration of the environment.⁹⁴ Deborah Stine noted that strengthened federal and state support for mass transit was one of the specific energy conservation and efficiency recommendations presented by her study group to the United States government for consideration.⁹⁵ The Committee believes that the expansion and strengthening of urban transit infrastructures in major Canadian cities and towns will facilitate the modal shift of commuters to public transit and will assist Canada in achieving its greenhouse gas reduction goals.

As urban transportation is the responsibility of provincial governments, the federal government has always been reluctant to get involved, especially in the recent years of fiscal restraint. There is, however, no constitutional barrier to the federal government using its spending power to become directly involved in urban transit projects. We must ask whether it should be involved and whether it can afford to be. Certainly, it is acknowledged on all sides, that there must be substantial investment in urban transit from some source over the next few years in Canada.⁹⁶

The Committee recognizes that it is not only urban transportation issues that must be addressed when mitigating climate change effects, but the national public transportation system and infrastructure.

⁹² *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Environment*, Issue No. 48, 30 November 1992, p. 50.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Issue No. 46, 17 November 1992, p. 18.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Issue No. 48, 30 November 1992, p. 21.

⁹⁶ John Christopher, *Transportation in Canada: Current Issues*, Background Paper BP-324E, Research Branch, Library of Parliament, Ottawa, December 1992.