

Interim Report on Passenger Rail Service Provided to Canadians by Via Rail Canada Inc.

FOREWORD

This interim report is broken down into three major areas which reflect some of the major legislative, economic, and operational factors that were revealed to the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications in the course of its proceedings. As in almost all instances where many issues are presented, a report must make an effort at categorizing these elements. Likewise, in almost all instances, a certain degree of arbitrariness is present in such an attempt at categorization. Most of the major areas of discussion in this interim report are inextricably intertwined. The presentation and breakdown according to headings and subheadings reflects the Committee's judgment as to a logical, and coherent presentation of these various issues. The interim report is intended to be an integral and unified document, and the Committee earnestly hopes that no one part of the Report will be employed out of context for the purpose of justifying any one point of view.

As a result of its findings thus far, it has become clear to the Committee that the issue of Canadian rail passenger services is a complex one with profound consequences. It is for this reason that the Committee is presenting, at this time, an interim report only. The Committee believes that further study is necessary, and it will continue its investigation if the current parliamentary session is not prorogued. If the current session is prorogued this summer or autumn, the Committee will ask that it be empowered to continue its study.

A. Introduction

On November 5, 1981, the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications commenced its hearings on the national rail passenger service provided to Canadian by VIA Rail Canada Inc. This series of hearings was instituted pursuant to the order of reference from the Senate of Canada of October 28, 1981 which reads as follows:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications be instructed to inquire into and report upon the national rail passenger service provided to Canadians by VIA Rail Canada Inc. and, in particular, to examine

- (a) the Federal Government's plans for reorganizing Canada's passenger train services announced by Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin on July 27, 1981;
- (b) the changes in passenger train services effected by Order in Council P.C. 1981-2171, dated August 6, 1981, made pursuant to subsection 64(1) of the *National Transportation Act*; and