

III. THE DECLINE OF INTERCITY RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE

Today, alternative forms of transportation have succeeded in capturing the majority of former rail patrons. Private automobiles account for 88 percent of intercity travel. The railroads' share is 1.4 percent.⁷ Domestic air travel has expanded ninefold since 1950 and now achieves twice the combined intercity passenger miles carried by rail, bus, and water.⁸ While total travel doubled during the same period, non-commutation rail travel now has only 40 percent of the passenger miles it did in 1950. The Passenger Transportation Survey of the 1963 Census of Transportation indicated only 3 percent of the intercity trips over 100 miles were by railroad. In the last two years, the rate of decline of intercity rail service has accelerated, and railroads now carry an even smaller proportion of total intercity travel. To the vast majority of travelling public, rail transportation over 300 miles no longer offers sufficient advantages of speed, cost, service, flexibility, or personal convenience.

7 This percentage includes 4.2 billion commutation passenger-miles.

8 Appendix A shows intercity passenger-miles, public and private, by kinds of transportation for the years 1958-1967 and for 1950 and 1955. The data includes certain commuter, suburban, and short-haul trips performed by all surface modes.