that deficit even more burdensome.

Under the policy of section 13a, before the Commission can order the continuance of a passenger service, it must be able to find that there is a public need for the service and that the continuation will not impose an undue burden on interstate commerce. Section 13a was not designed to promote passenger service, but to allow the carriers to reduce it. While the law does recognize that the railroads are common carriers with commensurate responsibilities to provide passenger service even if that service is unprofitable, the extent of that commitment is not unqualified. When the cost of providing that service reaches a point where it is unreasonably high considering the public need for the service, the carrier's financial position, and alternative forms of transportation, discontinuance is permitted by law. More and more trains can be expected to reach this point. The wholesale collapse of all non-corridor inter-city service is not imminent, but the prognosis is grave - fatal in some areas.

In a period where fewer people are using a shrinking rail passenger system for trips beyond 75 miles, generalizations about the value of such service may unfortunately obscure the real needs which non-corridor intercity service still provides to many people. The 12.8