

venience or necessity do not require its continuance, or (b) it finds the continuance will impair the ability of the carrier to meet its common carrier responsibilities, considering its overall financial condition.

3. The Secretary of Transportation is authorized to undertake a 1-year study of the existing and future potential for intercity railroad passenger service.

The facts and circumstances underlying these proposals are discussed in the report of the Interstate Commerce Commission transmitted to this committee under date of June 25, 1968, a report which paints a dismal picture of the future for intercity rail passenger service. We can only agree with the Commission that if there is, in fact, a need for intercity rail passenger service, then we must identify that need more clearly and fashion a new and more positive public policy toward meeting it as soon as possible.

Accordingly, the Department of Transportation supports the Commission's recommendation for a thorough study of this problem to assist us in the creation of such a policy. We think it important that expressions of interest in such a study have also been manifested within the railroad industry itself. In particular, the committee should note that Mr. Stuart T. Saunders, the chairman of the board of the Penn Central, urged in a speech before the New York Chamber of Commerce on June 6 of this year that industry and Government undertake a study of this problem in partnership with each other.

We think that the general guidelines for such a study which have been suggested by the Commission in its report are good ones. In particular, we would emphasize the Commission's admonition that any study of this problem should consider the overall intercity passenger transportation requirements of the country and should not attempt to look at intercity railroad passenger service except within this larger context.

At the same time, we must caution the committee against expecting that a thorough study of this problem will be either easy to accomplish or certain in its outcome. Over the past year we have devoted much thought to this problem and have satisfied ourselves that any such study will encounter substantial difficulties.

First and foremost of these difficulties are those associated with identifying intercity passenger transportation "needs."

While private and public agencies are slowly developing some capability to forecast what sort of transportation service people will use and in what amounts they will use it, we have yet to develop any workable notions of what sort of transportation service people "need." It is obvious that people need to be able to get from one city to the next by some means of transportation, and it is also obvious that we need to provide them with the best service it is possible to produce.

Mr. WATSON. Mr. Chairman, may I interrupt the gentleman at that point?

You use the word "need," "need," "need." Doesn't what the people want enter the picture here?

Mr. LANG. Mr. Watson, I think I speak to that very shortly.

Mr. WATSON. Excuse me.

Mr. LANG. The proposition which we do not yet know how to defend is that we need to provide intercity transportation service different