

roads can afford present passenger service, even if they can't afford the desirable new equipment.

As to the future need for passenger service, the ICC report said:

Clearly, all levels of government will face extremely heavy burdens in order to enlarge the present highway and air systems to accommodate public and private transportation to the future expansion of intercity travel.

Therefore, it is imperative that a comprehensive review be initiated of the future contribution which a modernized rail passenger system could make before some vital services are abandoned.

Even in terms of present needs, the ICC said:

Rail travel still provides a real service to those who fear flying. For those who do not own automobiles or prefer not to drive, the railroad has a distinct value.

Students, servicemen, the less affluent and senior citizens are the most frequent groups who use rail service. Some rail routes provide excellent service for tourists who want to view the country during their vacations rather than speed to and from a single destination.

Railroads also furnish passenger service that is less subject to cancellation because of weather conditions. Although its ability to prevent a near breakdown in intercity travel when the highways and airways are closed is tapped only infrequently, it is a very vital service during those periods.

Peak travel demands of holiday and vacation traffic are also substantially eased by rail service. Unfortunately for the carriers, a large part of the public uses the railroads only when they are crowded over the holidays or when the weather is bad.

The ICC added:

The reserve capacity of railroads to transport large masses of people during periods of national emergency is another asset of an intercity rail passenger system.

Gentlemen, I predict that if Congress does nothing—if you let present intercity rail passenger service be destroyed—it will not be more than a few years before such a public demand will arise that you will see the Government paying the entire bill to create a wholly new rail passenger system. The time to begin a rescue operation is immediately at hand. The cost of corrective action now would be minimal, the cost of delayed action will mount exorbitantly.

Now, in addition to my prepared statement, I would like to submit a piece of correspondence directed from the Acting Secretary of Transportation, Mr. Robson, to the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, on June 27 of this year.

Mr. FRIEDEL. If there is no objection, that letter will be included in the record.

(The document referred to follows:)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D.C., July 27, 1968.

HON. WARREN G. MAGNUSON,
Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We understand that your Committee may take swift action on the report and recommendations of the Interstate Commerce Commission concerning intercity rail passenger service.

Two of the recommendations of the Commission raise serious questions. They are (1) amending Section 13(a) of the Interstate Commerce Act and (2) maintenance of postal rail service so as to provide indirect subsidies to passenger train operations.

We would welcome the opportunity to study these recommendations in some detail. We assume we will be given the opportunity to comment on them under