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Vic Parsons

Continued from Page 6

Critics argue that these investments shouldn't be related to Canada, because the Western European trains serve larger populations over shorter distances.

COMPARABLE CASE

There's some validity to this view, but a case to watch might be Australia.

"Due to large capital investments and strong government support, Australian railways have been largely re-equipped in recent years," says a Via review completed in August. The Aussies are now looking at a high-speed train between Sydney and Melbourne.

What would it cost to invest in Via passenger service? Via estimates that in the next two decades, capital investment to maintain service at its existing, pre-cut, levels would be \$1.9 billion (before inflation is factored in).

Capital spending for motor vehicle traffic in that period would cost \$4.4 billion and for air transport, \$2.7 billion, as roads and airports become more congested.

If a high-speed train is introduced between Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, the investment needed would be \$2.5 billion. To serve the entire Windsor-Quebec City corridor, high-speed trains would require capital of \$5 billion. These amounts compare favorably with investments planned elsewhere.

Operating costs are discouraging. Losses over two decades with the current system would be close to \$9 billion, or about \$450 million a year, according to Via figures. That compares with a 1995 subsidy target of \$350 million after the planned cuts. But losses could likely be reduced if high-velocity and tourist-oriented trains attract more customers.

Asked about new investment, Bouchard was not encouraging. The bottom line is that Ottawa doesn't have the cash to pay for new equipment, he said.

But, he said, the royal commission will help sort out competing demands for billions of investment dollars. Let's hope it has real clout and is not just a public relations exercise.

TRIVIA



Taste Sensors

Tests show that the lobster's taste system is a million times more sensitive than a human's, says National Geographic. Lobsters use hundreds of thousands of hairlike taste sensors on their bodies and shells to detect the presence of prey dozens of feet away.



Toy Train

On its steep, spiraling descent via the so-called Batasia Loop from Ghum, the highest railway station on the Indian sub-continent, the famous narrow-gauge "toy train" appears to tie itself in a knot while whistling to clear its own caboose out of the way.

Fire Victims

Fires kill more children each year than any other accident. A child is seriously burned every four minutes.

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BARBARA GLENN

Barb was raised on the Charles Davidson farm just north of town, and is a life long resident of Acton. She is very familiar with town and country areas from Milton, Acton, Georgetown and Brampton. Barb has been an active, full time Real Estate Salesperson since 1980. She is very knowledgeable in income and investment properties.

ALEX GLENN

Alex has been an active, full time Real Estate Salesperson and Registered Public Appraiser for 25 years. His wide range of knowledge in sales and his experience in the Management position in the Real Estate business are indeed an asset to all his clients. He has a good working knowledge of Erin, Acton, Georgetown and Brampton areas.

Barb & Alex are looking forward to continuing to be of service to all their past, present and future clients and friends. They reside on Lake Ave. and enjoy the close access to the RE/MAX LEATHERTOWNE office at 2 Mill St. E., Acton, 853-2086.



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