

Day and night between 2014 and 2018

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: – “We are far from running after money in order to put fuel in our locomotives.” That is how the president of the Gaspésie Railway Society, Éric Dubé, sums up the difference between the two realities experienced by the transporter if we compare the situation prevailing four years ago and the present situation.

Controlled by the four MRCs covering the territory between Matapédia and Gaspé, the Gaspésie Railway Society was kept by Transport Quebec as the operator of freight trains after that ministry acquired the railroad for the value of the transporter’s debt, approximately \$4 million. The Gaspésie Railway Society takes care of train operations and basic maintenance chores on the line.

From seven employees in 2015, the Gaspésie Railway

Society now provides work to 31 people. “We will keep hiring in 2019,” specifies Luc Lévesque.

He expects to lay close to two kilometres of new tracks over the spring in order to facilitate shunting operations in New Richmond. “We put together windmill blade trains on the main line in New Richmond. Once the traffic will be restored east of New Richmond, we won’t be able to leave a train on the main line. We will lengthen the siding enough to put a full windmill blade train on it, and we will add another siding. We will also add a track to load lumber in New Richmond and reopen a number of sidings, including Black Cape and Irish Town (Saint-Jules).”

The company has also recently bought two locomotives formerly owned by Chemin de fer de Charlevoix, the owners of the line linking Quebec City

and Clermont. The two locomotives are RS-18 models, like the four locomotives the Gaspésie Railway Society already has.

The return of the passenger train between Matapédia and Gaspé will only occur once VIA Rail has the guarantee that the line will be safe, that the speed will be sufficient to cover the distance in a reasonable time and when the return to Gaspé will be certain.

The return of the l’Amiral tourist train is also subjected to certain conditions, including the repairs of a washout between Port Daniel and Gascons and the upgrading of a few bridges.

Year	# of carloads
2015	1,624
2016	1,741
2017	2,786
2018	4,323