



Photo: T. Haroun

Minister Lebouthillier.

Minister Lebouthillier addresses major regional issues

Thierry Haroun

GASPÉ: - At a press conference held on May 24, at the Gare Intermodale in Gaspé, Regional Minister, Diane Lebouthillier, announced the financing of five projects. She also addressed several regional issues, such as, Percé wharf, Employment Insurance and the railway.

Ms. Lebouthillier announced that her government was granting \$185,217 to five regional organizations that are looking to increase the vitality and quality of life of their respective community. The financial assistance was awarded under the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program of Canada Economic Development. Thus, CED provides \$18,637 to the Day Camp in Saint-Siméon; \$62,861 to the Centre de loisirs de H.A.M. located in the Magdalen Islands; \$40,250 to the Saint-François-d'Assise Sports Center; \$21,724 to the Club des Aigles of St-Jules and \$41,745 to the Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé Community Center.

Asked during the news conference if a renovation of the Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse, which is in a state a disrepair, could qualify for this government program, Minister Lebouthillier, said "For the moment, the answer is no. This program is destined to sports and leisure infrastructures, such as an arena or a ball park, for instance."

Other issues such as the railway situation were also brought up. "As you know, the Gaspé railway is owned by the Quebec government.

This said, I've recently met with the president of VIA Rail, the president of the Gaspésie Railway Society and the newly appointed regional minister, Sébastien Proulx, on the matter. What is interesting is that the president of VIA Rail is open to work on a step-by-step approach in order to offer train service up to New Carlisle."

A journalist asked her if Ottawa would chip in to repair the railway in the region, Minister Lebouthillier invited the journalist to ask the Federal Transport Minister.

Percé wharf and the program

The current tension between Percé mayor, André Boudreau, and *Les Bateliers de Percé* (as we reported in our two previous issues) also

came about during the conference. She admitted being well aware of the situation. She said, "one thing is clear in my mind: Percé is the tourism capital of the region and everyone agrees that a new wharf is needed. Now, I am confident that solutions will be found in time and that everyone is working with the same goal in order to reach an agreement."

As for the Employment Insurance Program, Minister Lebouthillier pointed out that a consultation on the reform is underway. "What's important here to say is that the idea is to work with the objective of making sure that people have jobs all year with good working conditions and that people have access to education and training that are in line with the need of the market place."

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