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Listuguj blockade prevents passage of one train

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LISTUGUJ: – A small group of Listuguj demonstrators blocked the Matapedia-Gaspé railway for a few hours on Monday, October 26, at the same spot as traffic was interrupted for 25 days between February 10 and March 5 earlier this year.

While the previous blockade was erected and maintained as a sign of support for the Wet'suet'en First Nation in British Columbia, this time around, the group likely supported the Mi'gmaq lobster fishermen of Nova Scotia, who are trying to establish a fall livelihood fishery. They face stern opposition from a majority of Non-Native fishermen. The Mi'gmaqs want the Canadian government to determine a clear definition of livelihood fisheries.

"There were three or four



Freight trains resumed circulating between Nouvelle and Matapedia on October 27.

Photo: G. Gagné

people when our employee met them. One lady was present during last winter's blockade. The exchange was very short and their presence pertains to the Nova Scotia conflict, in all likelihood," explained Éric Dubé, president of the Gaspésie Railway Society, the operator of freight trains on the Gaspé Peninsula

line.

"We informed Transports Québec, the owners of the railroad, of the situation. We know that the issue reached the Cabinet," he added.

The first freight train of the day was able to pass on the morning of October 26, but the presence of demonstrators prevented the passage of the re-

turning midday train, which was carrying cement, woodchips, and lumber.

Éric Dubé reached Listuguj chief Darcy Gray upon learning of the existence of the blockade and chief Gray was not aware of the initiative.

The group of demonstrators put a few objects on the

railway and built a fire nearby. However, after leaving the location in the afternoon, they did not come back to it that day or the following day.

A freight train passed through Listuguj shortly before noon on October 27. "We are relieved. We will keep an eye on the situation. Transports Québec is also maintaining contact with us," said Mr. Dubé. Rail traffic has taken place since with no problems. The Gaspésie Railway Society is a municipal entity. It was created in 1996 to prevent the Gaspé-Chandler line from being dismantled by Canadian National. The local corporation acquired the Matapedia-Chandler stretch to save that part from being abandoned as well.

The Gaspésie Railway Society lost \$500,000 in transportation revenues during the February-March blockade.