

PQ has a lot of ambition for Eastern Quebec

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Parti Québécois is proposing 12 major themes containing more than 70 points in Eastern Quebec for the election on October 3.

Inflation, housing, day care, transportation, decentralization, and fisheries are some examples of ideas that the PQ candidates in the ridings of Rimouski, Matane-Matapédia, Bonaventure, Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands intend to debate during the election campaign.

In Gaspé on August 25, the PQ said it wanted to make every effort to have the railroad repaired as far as Gaspé, noting that the CAQ had promised 2026, before advancing the deadline to 2025 and then eliminating the deadline.

"It is clear that, for us, in the horizon of a four-year mandate, we would like to go to Gaspé or very, very close to Gaspé, if we can have a realistic, pragmatic and quantified plan to get there: 2026, that's what we want," says the candidate for the Magdalen Islands, Joël Arseneau.

"If we can do it faster, we will do it faster," adds his col-



The five candidates from Est-du-Québec propose more than 70 elements for the October 3 election

Photo: N. Sergerie

league from Bonaventure, Alexis Deschênes.

"One thing that we are going to demand very quickly is that VIA Rail, heavily subsidized by the federal government, come and offer services to Gaspé residents as the rail is operational. Nothing prevents VIA Rail from offering service to New Richmond. As soon as it (the rail) goes to New Carlisle, they (VIA) can go to New Carlisle. As soon as it goes to Chandler, it's going to go to Chandler. Our commitment is strong," adds Mr. Deschênes.

Still in the transportation

sector, the PQ suggests a ClimatePass, an annual pass at \$365 per year or \$1 per day. Public transport and intercity transport would be covered by an "Opus card".

The RÉGÎM will be able to take advantage of it in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands

While an Orléans Express round-trip ticket between Gaspé and Quebec City costs nearly \$250 before taxes, the PQ suggests that the pass would allow unlimited access.

"\$365 per year for a pass and you take the bus as often as you want within the

Gaspésie region or towards Quebec. It's an annual pass for the use of all urban and interurban public transport, including those of the Société des traversiers du Québec for passengers," explains Mr. Arseneau, who puts the cost at between \$150 million and \$180 million.

"It's an investment, not an expense. It's a drop in the bucket that will completely change the way of getting around in Quebec," says the candidate from the Magdalen Islands.

On the lack of places in day cares, the PQ position is

simple: each child will have a place.

"For us, it's a child, a place. We will have to once again put the question of the one-stop shop what it represents, but everywhere in Eastern Quebec, each child will have their place. It is not negotiable," says the candidate in Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon.

The same principle can be applied to solve the lack of housing while the various studies show that there is a deficit of more than 2000 apartments in the region. "The Parti Québécois wants to meet the needs of the population.

We are going to do everything to promote housing construction until we fall into a vacancy rate that is balanced, that is to say more than 3%," declared Mr. Deschênes, who mentioned that in Bonaventure, municipalities have a 0% (vacancy) rate.

On the fisheries file, with the abandonment of the fishermen by the federal government, the PQ wants to recover its management via the independence of Quebec.

"Until then, we will stand up with the fishermen to claim their due. This applies to all fleets," argues Mr. Arseneau.