

## Geometry car inspects Matapedia to New Richmond line

GILLES GAGNÉ

NOUVELLE – CN Rail's geometry car rarely goes unnoticed by rail fans and other onlookers not used to seeing such a rare unit on railroads. Unit CN 1501 spent April 24 inspecting the line between Matapedia and New Richmond for the use of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG), which operates freight trains between the two points and Transports Québec, the ministry that owns the line.

The purpose of such a test car consists of analyzing the curves, the inclination of the slight slopes characterizing some railway curves, the span between the rails and it also suggests the speed that should be adopted on some stretches or the places that need upgrading in order to increase speeds.

"It gives us a very accurate indication of the parts of the line where work is required. It can be very minor work but it is useful, as we can, through correcting a situation quickly, avoid bigger work later," explains Luc Lévesque, director general of the SCFG.

This Gaspé Peninsula transporter usually requires

the services of the test car twice a year, when it passes near the area to do the same routine on the CN lines in the Matapedia Valley or northern New Brunswick.

"In the spring, it gives us indications about the consequences the winter has had on the line and over the fall, it provides us with details about what the maintenance program of the coming year should look like," says Mr. Lévesque.

"Experienced track people can also pinpoint the areas that pose a problem. There are old school maintenance documents showing how to check the inclination of a curve with a rope, however, detecting an inclination variation over 61 feet from a pickup truck is not evident, for example," adds Mr. Lévesque.

Technology now allows the report produced by the test car to be available the same day as data is collected.

### More repair contracts awarded

Meanwhile, Transports Québec has recently given the go-ahead to two construction firms for the upgrading



The CN geometry car passed in Nouvelle on the afternoon of April 24, behind three of the SCFG locomotives. The locomotives were headed to Matapedia for the following day's freight train and the test car was experiencing an intermittent engine problem, which explains why the locomotives accompanied it.

Photo: G. Gagné

or repairs of small structures located between Hope Town and Port Daniel.

Hamel Construction has been awarded the Port Daniel culvert replacement contract over Castilloux Brook. The culvert is located between Bellevue and Clemville Roads. The contract is valued at \$4,950,000, as communicated on April 25 by Transports Québec. Work is supposed to start in mid-May and has to be completed by mid-September.

The two small contracts for the Hope Town railroad

bridges have been awarded to Construction BSL Inc. for \$5,155,333.

The contracts to repair three small bridges, located over the Saint-Siméon River, Cullen's Brook and Day Brook in the east part of Bonaventure, will soon be awarded considering that the call for tenders deadline is scheduled for May 8.

In addition to the various contracts underway in Caplan, Bonaventure, Shigawake and Port Daniel, the latter contracts complete the main aspects of the work re-

quired to reopen the line between Caplan and the Port Daniel cement plant.

Transports Québec's planning suggests that the line will be reopened in 2024 to Port Daniel, but whether it will be at the beginning of the year or later is not yet official.

Cement from Port Daniel is currently being hauled by transport trucks to rail cars in New Richmond.

Traffic on the railway to serve St. Mary's Cement is expected to increase significantly once the line is functional.