



A well-attended train

GILLES GAGNÉ

MATAPEDIA - In 1979, when the Montreal-Gaspé train operated daily, annual ridership hovered around 90,400 passengers, despite numerous service modifications in the mid-1970s by Canadian National Railways and, later, by newly founded VIA Rail in 1977-1978. Those changes, concerning schedules, onboard services, and ticket prices, were heavily criticized at the time.

Between 2000 and 2010, when the service offered three weekly round trips, ridership ranged between 24,000 and 30,000 passengers most years.

Once again, Gaspesians had to deal with uneven services, ranging from multiple delays upon train departure in Montreal, tied to decisions of short-turning the train in New Carlisle, and the occasional suspension of the dining car,



Photo: Gilles Gagné

The VIA Rail train between Montreal and Gaspé was always well-attended, despite significant variations in the quality of services.

to name just a few.

Between 2000 and 2010, the annual budget for the Montreal-Gaspé train was nearly \$7 million. Its revenues were ranging between \$2 million and \$2.5 million most of the years. Those revenues were leading to the highest cost-recovery ratio

of all the regional trains of VIA Rail across Canada.

The annual ridership of the Montreal-Gaspé train was higher than that of the two other regional VIA Rail trains in Quebec combined. Those trains are serving Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and Abitibi.