



Marine Outlook

Highlights of the Marine Industry

April 2004 – Issue 7

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PORTS

Sept-Îles

A Very Busy Start to the Year for the Port of Sept-Îles

The Port of Sept-Îles has witnessed a very busy start to the year. After only three months of activity in 2004, almost 4 Mt of merchandise have been handled at the port, mainly concentrate and iron pellets. That is a million tons more than during the first three months of 2003. Some 74 ships have passed through the port since the beginning of the year, 20 more than last year.¹

The authors of a study concerning the viability of a container terminal at the Port of Sept-Îles will work from now until the beginning of the summer to determine the financial arrangements required for such a project. The authors of the study envisage that more than \$300 M in investments will be necessary to build a transshipment terminal with the capacity for 600 000 containers per year at the Port of Sept-Îles.²

Montreal

A Promising Start to the Year for the Port of Montreal

The Port of Montreal experienced an excellent first quarter in 2004, with a total of 4.6 Mt handled. This constitutes a 17% rise compared to the same period last year.³ The results for the first quarter predict that the Port of Montreal is heading towards its best performance in 14 years. The port authorities predict that if this trend continues, the total tonnage at the port could reach 21.6 Mt in 2004, 3.8% more than in 2003.⁴

As for container traffic, the port handled 2.5 Mt of containerized merchandise, 12% more than in last year's first quarter. This equals 270 480 TEU (twenty foot equivalent unit) containers passing through the port, a rise of 14% compared to the same period last year. All of this leads us to believe that the port could enjoy another record year in the container sector in 2004. The liquid cargo sector also increased substantially compared to last year, with a total of 940 000 t, a 42% increase. The only sector to have suffered a drop in tonnage is that of miscellaneous non-containerized goods.⁵

Three new shipping companies, CMA CGM, Lloyd Triestino and Zim Israël Navigation Company, will begin a weekly container service in April, linking Northern Europe with the Port of Montreal. The three ships each have a capacity of 1 500 TEU containers.⁶

Quebec

Increase in Handled Tonnage

By March 31, 2004, the tonnage handled in the Port of Quebec totalled 3.8 Mt, a 5% rise compared to last year's corresponding period. The tonnage of solid goods and general cargo increased. The port welcomed 138 ships during the first three months of the year, roughly the same number as during the first three months of 2003.⁷

¹ « *Projet de terminal au port de Sept-Îles : intéressant, mais...* », [Radio-Canada Website](#), April 13, 2004.

² Ibid

³ « *Excellent premier trimestre au port de Montréal* », press release, [Port of Montreal](#), April 20, 2004.

⁴ « *Le port de Montréal vogue vers de solides performances pour 2004* », [Le Soleil](#), April 21, 2004.

⁵ « *Excellent premier trimestre au port de Montréal* », press release, [Port of Montreal](#), April 20, 2004.

⁶ Brent, Frederick, « *CMA CGM, Lloyd Triestino, Zim Coming to Montreal* », [Canadian Sailings](#), April 5, 2004.

⁷ Quebec Port Authority.

Port-Cartier

Increase in Handled Tonnage

As of March 31, 2004, the tonnage handled at Port-Cartier totalled 2.7 Mt, 29% more than what was handled during the same period last year. The tonnage of concentrate and iron pellets increased during 2004's first quarter compared to last year's first quarter.⁸

Port-Alfred

Slight Rise in Handled Tonnage

By March 31, 2004, the total tonnage handled at the Port of Port-Alfred was 868 000 t, a rise of 4% compared to the same period in 2003. The tonnage of bauxite and fuel oil was greater than the drop in tonnage of alumina, caustic soda, fluorite and green coke. As for the number of ships, 28 passed through the port between January and March 2004, two more than for the same period last year.⁹

Baie-Comeau

Rise in Handled Tonnage

By the end of March 2004, the tonnage handled at the Port of Baie-Comeau totalled approximately 543 000 t, 16% more than the same period in 2003. An increase in the tonnage of non-specified merchandise at the Cargill wharf largely explains this rise in tonnage at the Port of Baie-Comeau, which itself is due to the resumption of activities at the Cargill wharf after the settling of a labour dispute. As for marine traffic, 37 ships passed through the Port of Baie-Comeau during the first three months of the year, slightly higher than last year's 34 over the same period.¹⁰

Approximately 217 000 t of goods must be added to this tonnage. This is merchandise that passed through the Port of Baie-Comeau (and also the Port of Matane) via the *Georges-Alexandre-Lebel* rail ferry during the first three months of the year, representing a slight 1% decrease compared to the same period last year. This drop is a result of a slight decline in the tonnage of paper and wood. Between January and March 2003, the train ferry made 131 round trips, one less than during the same period last year.¹¹

The Alcoa aluminum plant would like to invest \$1 billion in Baie-Comeau to modernize its Soderberg potlines and thus bring its production capacity from 437 000 to 547 000 t per year. In return, Alcoa is asking the Government of Quebec to provide it with an additional 175 megawatts of power, as well as a \$170 M interest-free loan. Negotiations are presently underway between the Government of Quebec and Alcoa.¹² This increase in aluminum production would translate into a rise in handled tonnage at the Port of Baie-Comeau.

Bécancour

Enlargement of the Liquid Goods Storage Site

As of March 31, 2004, the tonnage handled at the Port of Bécancour totalled 390 000 t, 7% more than over the same period in 2003. This rise is partly due to the increase in tonnage of magnesite and paraffin. Consequently, the Port of Bécancour welcomed a total of 22 ships between January and March 2004, five more than during the first three months of 2003.¹³

Servitank, a division of the Prommel Group of Trois-Rivières, has asked for permission to enlarge its liquid goods storage site at the Port of Bécancour. The company intends to pursue phase 2 of its project by adding at least seven tanks to the existing nine, over a period of five years.¹⁴

Between now and July 2004, the Port of Bécancour will invest some \$300,000 to improve the safety of its facilities. A fence will surround the port, and equipment such as motion detectors and surveillance cameras will be installed. In addition to this, security guards will patrol the site when ships are docked in the port.¹⁵

⁸ Québec Cartier Public Relations Services.

⁹ Port-Alfred Port Authority.

¹⁰ "Detailed report on tonnage handled at harbours and ports in Quebec", [Transport Canada](#), January to March 2004.

¹¹ « *Rapports des tonnages manutentionnés sur le traversier-rail Georges-Alexandre-Lebel* », [SOPOR and COGEMA](#), 2003 and 2004.

¹² Paradis, Steeve, « *Alcoa a une proposition en main* », [Le Soleil](#), February 17, 2004.

¹³ Bécancour Port Authority.

¹⁴ Aubry, Marcel, « *Bécancour – D'autres réservoirs* », [Le Nouvelliste](#), February 14, 2004.

¹⁵ Lafrenière, Martin, « *Du budget pour améliorer la sécurité* », [Le Nouvelliste](#), January 23, 2004.

Trois-Rivières

Increase in Handled Tonnage

As of March 31, 2004, the tonnage handled at the Port of Trois-Rivières totalled 378 000 t, up 15% compared to the same period last year. The tonnage of grains and solid and liquid cargo all increased. Only the tonnage of general goods registered a slight decline. The port welcomed 46 ships during the first three months of the year, compared to 30 last year.¹⁶

Logistec, the cargo handling leader at the Port of Trois-Rivières, foresees the possibility of establishing a centre in Trois-Rivières for the distribution and storage of the aluminum plants' surplus production, at little cost. The Trois-Rivières Port Authority is presently considering this proposal.¹⁷

Sorel

Drop in Handled Tonnage

By March 13, 2004, the tonnage handled at the Port of Sorel totalled 292 000 t, 38% less than for the same date in 2003. The tonnage of wheat and cereal recorded a significant drop during the first three months of the year, compared to last year's figures. The tonnage of metal ingots also decreased. The number of ships passing through the port between January and March 2004 totalled 22, 13 less than during the same period last year.¹⁸

Port-Saguenay

Reinforcement of Security Measures

As of March 31, 2004, the total tonnage handled at Port-Saguenay was approximately 55 000 t, 20% less than for the corresponding period in 2003. The port saw its tonnage of newsprint and caustic soda decrease. The temporary closure of Abitibi-Consol's Port-Alfred paper plant explains this drop in transshipments of newsprint. Between January and March 2004, the port welcomed ten ships, two less than last year.¹⁹

The port must implement an antiterrorist security plan before July 1 in order to be in compliance with the new International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. The security measures will apply to personnel as much as to the port facilities. All port employees will have to undergo a security check carried out by the RCMP. As far as the facilities are concerned, the port must be equipped with computerized barriers, surveillance cameras and additional fences around the facilities.²⁰

Matane

Decrease in Tonnage of Gasoline and Petroleum Products

By the end of March 2004, the tonnage handled at the Port of Matane totalled approximately 43 000 t, down 8% from the same date last year. The tonnage of wood pulp increased, whereas the tonnage of gasoline and petroleum products fell. Nine ships passed through the port during the first three months of the year, one less than during the same period last year.²¹

217 000 t of merchandise must be added to this tonnage, representing goods that passed through the Port of Matane via the *Georges-Alexandre-Lebel* rail ferry during the first three months of 2004. (See *Port of Baie-Comeau*, pg.2)²²

Rimouski

Decrease in Tonnage of Gasoline and Petroleum Products

As of March 31, 2004, the total tonnage handled at the Port of Rimouski was 39 000 t, 29% less than for the same period in 2003. A decrease in the off-loading of gasoline and petroleum products explains this drop. Consequently, the number of ships passing through the port also fell, with a total of eight ships, two less than during the same period in 2003.²³

¹⁶ Trois-Rivières Port Authority.

¹⁷ Veillette, Guy, « *Logistec aimerait implanter un centre de distribution d'aluminium* », *Le Nouvelliste*, February 27, 2004.

¹⁸ « Detailed report on tonnage handled at harbours and ports in Quebec », *Transport Canada*, January to March 2004.

¹⁹ Port-Saguenay Port Authority.

²⁰ Villeneuve, Denis, « *Port Saguenay prépare un plan antiterroriste* », *Progrès-Dimanche*, March 28, 2004; « *Les employés soumis à une enquête* », *Progrès-Dimanche*, March 28, 2004.

²¹ « Detailed report on tonnage handled at harbours and ports in Quebec », *Transport Canada*, January to March 2004.

²² « *Rapports des tonnages manutentionnés sur le traversier-rail Georges-Alexandre-Lebel* », *SOPOR and COGEMA*, 2003 and 2004.

²³ « Detailed report on tonnage handled at harbours and ports in Quebec », *Transport Canada*, January to March 2004.

Pointe-au-Pic

Decrease in Newsprint Tonnage

By March 31, 2004, the total tonnage handled at the Port of Pointe-au-Pic was 16 341 t, two times less than last year's corresponding period. The decrease in newsprint tonnage is entirely to blame for this drop. The number of ships fell, with a total traffic of five ships, compared to seven for the same period in 2003.²⁴

Gaspé

Decrease in Petroleum Products

As of March 31, 2004, the tonnage handled at the Port of Gaspé was approximately 9 945 t, 12% less than over the same period in 2003. This drop is the result of a fall in the tonnage of petroleum products.²⁵

For several years, the federal government has been preparing to transfer the ownership of certain ports, including Gaspé. After having studied the case, the *Corporation portuaire de Gaspé* refused ownership of the port, as it judged the financial assistance offered by Transport Canada to be insufficient. The closure of the Noranda smelting plant in Murdochville and the change in international safety regulations have put the port in a very precarious economic situation.²⁶

Gros-Cacouna

Slow Start to the Season for the Port of Gros-Cacouna

During the first three months of the year, the tonnage handled at the Port of Gros-Cacouna totalled 5 658 t, down 80% from last year's corresponding period. This steep decline is due to a decrease in the tonnage of newsprint and scrap metal and iron. From January to March, the port welcomed two ships, compared to eight last year.²⁷

As for the possibility that the Port of Gros-Cacouna may obtain the Gaz Métropolitain methane tanker terminal, nothing is yet certain. Gaz Métro has still not made public its final choice of a site for the construction of this terminal.²⁸ (*For more details, see the Commodities section – Natural Gas, pg.7*)

Chandler

Economic Failure of the Gaspésia Plant

The closure of the Papiers Gaspésia plant is extremely bad news for Chandler's economy. The modernization works at the factory were interrupted in February due to overspending of the initial \$200 M budget. The resumption of activities at the Gaspésia plant would have allowed the Port of Chandler to once again see a large volume of handled tonnage.²⁹

Cap-aux-Meules

Fall in Handled Tonnage

As of March 31, 2004, the tonnage handled at the Port of Cap-aux-Meules was 8 937 t, 15% less than over the same period last year. This fall is a result of a decrease in the tonnage of diesel.³⁰

Havre-Saint-Pierre

Rise in Handled Tonnage

By March 31, 2004, the tonnage handled at the Port of Havre-Saint-Pierre totalled 131 t, 10% higher than for the same period in 2003. The tonnage handled during the first three months of the year was limited exclusively to non-specified goods. No tonnage of ilmenite was handled at the Port of Havre-Saint-Pierre during this period. Six ships passed through the port, the same number as during last year's corresponding period.³¹

²⁴ « Detailed report on tonnage handled at harbours and ports in Quebec », [Transport Canada](#), January to March 2004.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ « *Gaspé ne veut pas du port de mer* », [Radio-Canada Website](#), January 21, 2004.

²⁷ « Detailed report on tonnage handled at harbours and ports in Quebec », [Transport Canada](#), January to March 2004.

²⁸ Dumont, Marc-André, « *Cacouna confiante d'obtenir le terminal méthanier* », [Les Affaires](#), March 27, 2004.

²⁹ « *Situation dramatique pour les gens d'affaires de Chandler* », [Radio-Canada Website](#), February 5, 2004.

³⁰ « Detailed report on tonnage handled in harbours and ports in Quebec », [Transport Canada](#), January to March 2004.

³¹ Ibid

Baie-Déception

Increase in Production at the Raglan Mine

In 2004, Falconbridge will carry out an economic feasibility study on a 20% increase in annual production at the Raglan nickel mine located in Quebec's far north. Falconbridge would increase its annual production by 5 000 t of nickel contained in concentrate, in 2008 at the earliest. In 2003, the mine produced 25 110 t of nickel and 6 628 t of copper, as well as cobalt and metals from the platinum group. The existing concentrator has the capacity to process 3 000 t of ore per day. The concentrate is sent by boat to Quebec via the Port of Baie-Déception, and then transhipped in trains to the smelting plant in Sudbury. The matte³² produced is returned by train to the Port of Quebec, to be shipped to the Falconbridge refinery in Norway.³³

Review of 2004's First Quarter

Estimate and Comparison of the Tonnage Handled in Quebec's Leading Ports During the First Quarter of 2003 and 2004

LIST OF PORTS	Jan-March 2003	Jan-March 2004	Variation 2004/2003
1. Sept-Îles	2.9 Mt	4.0 Mt	+38%
2. Montreal	4.0 Mt	4.6 Mt	+17%
3. Quebec	3.7 Mt	3.8 Mt	+ 3%
4. Port-Cartier	2.1 Mt	2.7 Mt	+ 29%
5. Port-Alfred	832 Kt	868 Kt	+ 4%
6. Baie-Comeau ³⁴	467 Kt	543 Kt	+ 16%
7. Bécancour	364 Kt	390 Kt	+ 7%
8. Trois-Rivières	328 Kt	378 Kt	+ 15%
9. Sorel	472 Kt	292 Kt	- 38%
10. Port-Saguenay	68 Kt	55 Kt	- 20%
11. Matane ³⁴	47 Kt	43 Kt	- 8%
12. Rimouski	55 Kt	39 Kt	- 29%
13. Pointe-au-Pic	33 Kt	16 Kt	- 52%
14. Gaspé	11 Kt	10 Kt	- 12%
15. Gros-Cacouna	27 Kt	6 Kt	- 80%
TOTAL	15.4 Mt	17.8 Mt	+ 16%

Source: Port Authorities and Transport Canada.
Compilation: DRPE, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Quebec Region.

The most important ports in Quebec handled a total of 17.8 Mt during 2004's first quarter, 16% more than during 2003's first quarter. Each of the ten most important ports in Quebec, as of the end of the first quarter of 2004, experienced a rise in their tonnage during the first three months of the year, except for Sorel and Port-Saguenay.

SAINT-LAWRENCE SEAWAY

Opening of the 2004 Shipping Season

The official opening of the St-Lawrence Seaway's 46th shipping season took place on the expected date, March 25, 2004. The St-Lawrence Seaway benefits from a new 26 foot, 6 inch operating draft (3 inches more than last year) for inland vessels and ocean-going ships. Ships will thus be able to transport 300 more tons of goods each trip.³⁵

The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation (SLSMC) also unveiled the first advertising sign for an awareness campaign promoting the numerous advantages of marine transport: decreased road congestion, atmospheric pollution and road maintenance costs. These signs will be placed on Highway 400, along the Toronto-Windsor Corridor.³⁶

Worrisome Water Levels

The water levels of all of the Great Lakes, except for Lake Ontario, were lower at the beginning of March than their historical average (1908-2002) for this time of year. On the other hand, the levels of all the

³² Matte is a sulphurous metallic substance produced in the first smelting of a treated ore that is not sufficiently refined.
³³ Riverin, François, « Falconbridge agrandira la mine Raglan », *Les Affaires*, March 20, 2004.
³⁴ This data does not include the tonnage passing through the Ports of Baie-Comeau and Matane via the *Georges-Alexandre-Lebel* rail ferry.
³⁵ « La Voie maritime du Saint-Laurent ouvre à la date prévue », press release, *Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System Website*, March 25, 2004.
³⁶ Ibid

Great Lakes are higher than they were at the same time last year. Environment Canada predicts that the level of Lake Superior should continue its seasonal drop in March. The water levels in Lakes Michigan/Huron, St. Claire, Erie and Ontario should begin their seasonal rise over the course of the coming weeks, with the arrival of spring.³⁷ The water level at the Port of Montreal on the St-Lawrence River³⁸ is near its historical average for this time of year, as well as being above Chart Datum³⁹.

Increase in Tolls

A 2% rise in freight costs and shipping rights came into effect in January 2004 in the two sections of the St-Lawrence Seaway: Montreal-Lake Ontario and the Welland Canal.⁴⁰

Marine Safety

The Canadian government will reinforce its marine transport security regulations. Over the course of the coming months, new safety measures will be implemented in ports visited by foreign ships. There are numerous measures envisaged, such as the addition of barriers and security offices, and the hiring of security guards. What is more, each port must develop a security plan suited to its circumstances. The predicted budget for the implementation of these safety measures is \$605 M.⁴¹

Joint Canada-U.S. Study on the Future of the Great Lakes St-Lawrence Seaway System

It is important to remember that Transport Canada has always maintained that within the present study, there was no question of examining the widening or deepening of the St-Lawrence Seaway. Canada and the United States are committed to carrying out a joint study with the aim of identifying possible solutions for maintaining and optimizing the St-Lawrence Seaway's existing infrastructure. More precisely, the study will attempt to identify current maintenance and long-term capital requirements which will be necessary in the future for maintaining the existing St-Lawrence Seaway infrastructure. Transport Canada reminds us that the Government of Canada is working in conjunction with Canadian federal and provincial departments, as well as various participants from the private sector, in the realization of this study.⁴²

COMMODITIES

Iron Ore

Increase in Chinese Demand for Iron Ore

In 2003, the three mines in Quebec recorded an increase in their shipments of iron ore as a result of a rise in their exports, whereas Canadian demand for iron ore decreased. This rise is almost exclusively the result of a strong growth in demand for iron ore in China. Demand in the European Union, the United States and Canada has remained very stable, and even fell at certain times of the year.⁴³

Demand for iron ore should rise in 2004 due to a rise in steel consumption in China. In this context, the three Quebec/Labrador mine companies anticipate maintaining or increasing their shipments in 2004. The Québec Cartier mine expects sales of 13.2 Mt of ore, 8.8 Mt of which will be pellets. Wabush Mines foresees using its pelleting facilities at full capacity, which is 6 Mt. A third of its production will be destined for the Chinese market. The Iron Ore Company of Canada predicts producing at full capacity and shipping more than 16 Mt of ore.⁴⁴ The most recent statistics on the production of iron ore in Quebec report a total production of 839 000 t for January 2004, 20% more than in January 2003.⁴⁵

Wheat

Anticipated Drop in Canadian Exports of Wheat

Analysts from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) predict that Canadian wheat exports will drop 500 t during the 2004-2005 harvest-year, to reach 12 Mt. This is mainly due to a decline in production in Ontario. The AAFC analysts believe that the 2003-2004 harvest-year, which ends in July, will produce exports of 12.5 Mt. This is slightly below the decadal average of 13.5 Mt.⁴⁶

³⁷ *Level News*, Volume 12 - Issue 3, *Environment Canada*, March 11, 2004.

³⁸ *Water Levels – Great Lakes and Montreal Harbour*, monthly bulletin prepared by the Canadian Hydrographic Service, *Fisheries and Oceans Canada*, February 2004.

³⁹ Chart Datum is a reference point of the depths indicated on a nautical chart. In tidal zones, the Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS) uses the lower low water, large tide level. In non-tidal zones, the low water level used by the SHC is that below which the level of water will practically never fall.

⁴⁰ St. Lawrence Seaway – Toll Schedule, *Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System Website* 2004.

⁴¹ « *Ottawa renforcera la sécurité des ports* », *Radio-Canada Website*, April 7, 2004.

⁴² Presentation by Marc Fortin – Director, Seaway and Domestic Shipping Policy – Transport Canada, The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Study, *SODES Issue Table – Federal Departments*, April 20, 2004.

⁴³ « *Bilan et faits saillants de l'industrie minière du Québec en 2003* », *Ressources naturelles, Faune et Parcs du Québec*, 2003.

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ "Production of Canada's Leading Minerals", *Natural Resources Canada*, January 2004.

⁴⁶ "Canada: Grains and Oilseeds Outlook", *Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada*, April 1, 2004.

Aluminum

Good Outlook for Aluminum in 2004

The outlook for world aluminum demand is slightly better in 2004 than it was last year. The economic recovery in the United States, Europe and Japan augurs well for an increase in world demand for aluminum in 2004. However, it is China in particular, that should continue to demonstrate important growth in demand for aluminum in 2004. Alcan's management predicts that world demand for aluminum will increase more quickly than supply in 2004, which will reduce world stocks by between 100 000 and 200 000 tons.⁴⁷

Already, statistics on Canadian aluminum production in January 2004 show a production totalling 242 000 tons, 1% more than in January 2003. However, it is still too early to speak of a real increase in Canadian production of aluminum in 2004.⁴⁸

The Government of Quebec recently announced the renewal of a \$500,000 financial contribution to the *Société de la Vallée de l'aluminium* for the year 2004-2005. This subsidy will provide the *Société* with the means to continue its aluminum promotion and development of the aluminum transformation sector. This financial assistance is in addition to measures announced by the Minister of Finance while preparing the budget. The purpose of these measures is to support the development of the Aluminum Valley.⁴⁹

Lumber

The Canadian Lumber Trade Dispute with the United States: A Settlement Soon?

Fortified by a recent victory with the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Canada will wait for a NAFTA ruling, expected to come at the end of April, before presenting a counter-offer to the United States, with the aim of settling the lumber crisis. The main objective of this future counter-offer is an increase in the proportion of Canadian exports exempt from trade barriers. It will also insist that Canadian producers are reimbursed some of the revenue accumulated since the beginning of the implementation of American sanctions on Canadian lumber exports. Finally, it will demand that a free trade agreement is granted to each province that carries out the reforms of its forestry practices called for by the Americans.⁵⁰ Without a settlement of the Canada-U.S. lumber conflict, the Canadian and Quebec lumber industry cannot hope for an upswing in production (and exports to the United States) over the next few months.

Natural Gas

Where Will the Gaz Métropolitain Methane Terminal Be Built?

According to the information reported by the daily newspaper, *Le Soleil*, on April 3, Gaz Métropolitain will build its methane tanker terminal on the South Shore of Quebec, in the Beaumont/Lévis-est sector, at a cost of \$650 M. However, Gaz Métro would only say that the final choice of a site will be unveiled within a few weeks at the latest. Let us remember that the region of Rivière-du-Loup and its Port of Gros-Cacouna is Gaz Métro's other prospective site for the construction of the terminal.⁵¹

FERRIES

Ferry Project between the Acadian Peninsula and Gaspé

The sea link project between the Acadian Peninsula and Gaspé could become reality within the next two years. A report filed in January 2004 pronounced a ferry service between the two shores to be economically feasible. The project, with estimated costs of \$13 M, would save users a road trip of 300 kilometres between Grande-Anse, in New Brunswick, and Paspébiac, in Gaspé. The proposed ferry, a catamaran, would only have a distance of 25 kilometres to cover to link the two towns, and would have a capacity of 150 passengers, as well as about thirty vehicles. The number of people who would use the service annually is estimated at 120 000.⁵²

⁴⁷ « Un bilan 2003 plutôt passable pour Alcan », *Radio-Canada Website*, March 17, 2004.

⁴⁸ « Production of Canada's Leading Minerals », *Natural Resources Canada*, January 2004.

⁴⁹ « Les ministres Audet et Gauthier et le député Blackburn annoncent la reconduction d'une aide financière de 500 000 \$ à la Société de la Vallée de l'aluminium », *Canada News Wire*, April 2, 2004.

⁵⁰ Desrosiers, Éric, « Bois d'œuvre : pas de contre-offre avant la décision de l'ALENA », *Le Devoir*, March 25, 2004.

⁵¹ Couture, Pierre, « Gaz Métro opte pour Beaumont », *Le Soleil*, April 3, 2004.

⁵² « Une étude conclut à la rentabilité du lien maritime entre Paspébiac et Grande-Anse », *Radio-Canada Website*, January 22, 2004.

CRUISES - TOURS

Educational Sea Tours

Aqua-Tour, a company in Saint-Fabien, will give young people a chance to discover the region's aquatic wildlife. Aqua-Tour has already been offering its sea tours to high school students for four years. The company intends to broaden this unique experience to include elementary students.⁵³

New Summer Cruises between Gaspé and the North Shore

Écomertours Nord-Sud, of Rimouski, will offer six to ten-day cruises bound for the North Shore and Anticosti Island this summer. The boat, *l'Écho des Mers*, measures 170 feet and can accommodate 44 passengers and 18 crew members. The boat's home port will be Carleton, and from there it will head towards Anticosti Island, Minganie, the Lower North Shore and Labrador, via Bonaventure Island and Gaspé. In particular, the cruise will give those aboard a chance to observe marine mammals and birds. The cruises will run from June 26 to September 10, after which the boat will go back to Montreal for fall cruises on the St. Lawrence River.⁵⁴

INTERNATIONAL CRUISES

No Cruise Boats in Baie-Comeau This Summer

Ultimately, despite several attempts, the town of Baie-Comeau was not able to attract any cruise boats for summer 2004. We knew that the Croisière Transboréale project, to establish a maritime route between Quebec and the Atlantic provinces, was delayed. However, a replacement project, *les Croisières de l'esprit canadien*, seemed to be on the right track, since in February, the town of Baie-Comeau invited traders to prepare themselves for the arrival of cruise boats with capacities of 500 passengers, from June 2004 onwards. This cruise, which proposed to link Montreal to the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, with stopovers in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, Baie-Comeau and the Magdalen Islands, will not see the light of day this year after all. Intair, which was to run the cruise, states that the season is too advanced to attempt a market launch, especially as the \$9 M funding has not been found in full, and the ship has still not been purchased.⁵⁵

Large \$17 M Project to Attract International Cruises to Saguenay

The mayor of Saguenay has a large project in mind for his town: the construction of a port village and all the infrastructures required to welcome cruises of international calibre to the Baie des Ha! Ha! "The project must be concluded quickly. Everything must be completed in 2006. We have even started to carry out expropriations", he declared. The expected investment from the federal and provincial governments amounts to \$12 M. "It's a large bite to swallow" pointed out Lucienne Robillard, the Minister of Industry and Economic Development, during a telephone interview with the mayor and his team. The project has been well received by the Government of Quebec, but money is in short supply.⁵⁶

RECREATIONAL BOATING

Sept-Îles Marina Threatened with Closure

The *Club nautique de Sept-Îles*, the largest marina on the North Shore, with 130 berths, is threatened with closure. Built 20 years ago, the marina is in a very poor state. Whether it is on a mechanical, civil or electrical level, the infrastructures do not conform to all of the standards, even some environmental standards. The wharves and pontoons are dilapidated and are not in compliance with safety standards. A study estimates the cost of renovation to be \$2.4 M. The marina is hoping for financial assistance from the City of Sept-Îles and from the Canada/Quebec Infrastructure Program, in order to finance the work. While waiting for possible renovations, recreational boaters will have to remove their boats from the marina during high winds this summer.⁵⁷

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⁵³ « Excursions éducatives en mer », [Radio-Canada Website](#), April 12, 2004.

⁵⁴ « Nouvelles croisières estivales entre la Gaspésie et la Côte-Nord », [Radio-Canada Website](#), April 13, 2004; Gagné, Gilles, « Deux nouvelles liaisons en 2004 », [Le Soleil](#), April 14, 2004.

⁵⁵ « Pas de bateau de croisières à Baie-Comeau cet été », [Radio-Canada Website](#), April 6, 2004.

⁵⁶ « Bateaux de croisières – Le maire Tremblay essaie de vendre son grand projet », [Le Quotidien](#), March 6, 2004.

⁵⁷ « La marina de Sept-Îles : fermeture en 2005 ? », [Radio-Canada Website](#), April 13, 2004.