

# Via Rail shooting itself in the foot

Once again, Via Rail is making schedule changes that may provide some benefit for travellers in Quebec, but will add inconvenience and longer travel times for those in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

The latest schedule changes, as reported in the Times & Transcript Monday, will take effect on Jan. 7 and send the Ocean through the Sainte-Foy station in Quebec, as opposed to the Charny station. Via Rail justified the

## **We Say:**

Via should be looking for customer incentives, not ways to drive them away

change by saying the Sainte-Foy station sees a far greater number of passengers than Charney — 146,000 vs. 13,000. We would congratulate Via Rail for making the move

and making its service accessible to more passengers, if it didn't mean that paying customers here in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had to pay for it in time.

The changes to the schedule mean the Via train will be going in reverse, at slow speeds, over the Quebec Bridge. This also means that passengers travelling from Halifax (and Moncton) to Montreal will have to leave earlier and have another hour and 20 minutes added to the trip. This makes the voyage to Montreal by rail almost 24 hours, when the trip by car from Moncton to Montreal takes most drivers about 12 hours. The trip by plane is under two hours.

Once again, it seems that Via Rail is determined to shoot itself in the foot by alienating passengers from the East Coast. We agree with the statement by Ted Bartlett of Transport Action Atlantic that this is “no way to run a railroad.”

As Mr. Bartlett says, the railroad should endeavour to find ways of making its services more convenient for the travelling public. Via Rail continues to find ways to drive away customers when it should be looking for ways to convince customers they should be taking the train.