

Montreal Gazette, Dec. 3, 2007
Letter to the Editor by Avrom David Shtern

RE: "Afternoon commute should be better, AMT says" by, Cheryl Cornacchia

Dear Editor,

According to AMT spokesperson Mélanie Nadeau "...snow caused mechanical difficulties for some of the trains..." on the Dorion-Rigaud commuter rail line. (" Afternoon commute should be better, AMT says" by, Cheryl Cornacchia , Montreal Gazette, Dec. 3, 2007.) Cancellations and delays were the order of the day. However, trains on this line habitually break down and off-peak runs are infrequent. Service on the Dorion-Rigaud line is inadequate to say the least. Riders are frustrated and potential commuters are discouraged from using the service.

The AMT's excuse is unacceptable. Mechanical difficulties are a symptom of mismanagement on the part of the AMT and the operator Canadian Pacific Railway. Thirty years ago track walkers and section gangs would be working into the night removing the snow for the daily commute. In no flat time switches would be cleared of ice. When all else failed, the train was still seen as the reliable alternative. Because of cutbacks in personnel this is no longer the case. Notwithstanding Environment Canada's forecast of an impending snow storm, CPR crews only started their work in earnest during the daylight hours.

CP cannot plead poverty. It is earning record profits and the Lakeshore line is one of its busiest in Eastern Canada. The AMT on the other hand is better at providing absolution than reliable service.

This comes at a time when there is renewed interest in using the CPR line for the airport shuttle. No doubt this right-of-way is the logical way to go as it is shorter than CN's and it has the potential of serving local commuters as well. But before any decisions are taken, the chronic problems of the Dorion-Rigaud commute must be solved post-haste.

Yours Sincerely,

Avrom David Shtern,
Cote Saint Luc, QC,