

# Gilles Pouliot responds to VIA Rail issue

The Honourable Rene Fontaine  
 Minister of Northern Development and Mines  
 10th Floor, 10 Wellesley Street East  
 Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1G2

Dear Minister:  
 I would like to express my support for your opposition to the recent cuts made by the federal government to the VIA rail network. However, I am amazed that while you were criticizing these cuts, plans were already in the works to emasculate the Ontario Northland Railway.

In your statement on October 5, you quite correctly pointed out the importance of rail transportation in the North. You said that "The communities that need reliable train service the most - small, isolated communities in Northern Ontario, and those elsewhere in the province and across Canada - will be severely affected by this decision." In addition, you said that "...rail service continues today to be a vital component of economic survival for many Northern communities."

In addition, the Minister of Transportation has expressed the opinion that "...now is not the time for the federal government to contemplate either elimination

of, or reductions in, passenger rail services."

If the government feels so strongly about the preservation of Ontario's rail network, why is it actively contemplating cuts to its own rail services?

For example, your Ministry has set up a task force to study rail needs in Northeastern Ontario whose terms of reference clearly envision a reduction in service. The task force is directed to examine the possibility of providing "...better but reduced service at lesser cost..." Instead of looking at ways to reduce services, the government should be searching for ways to enhance the service to make it more attractive to users.

Well before the task force even has a chance to make its recommendations, the cuts are already underway at the ONR. Union representatives in North Bay have been told by management that once two mines in the area close, 130 to 150 jobs will be slashed. This cut represents more than 10

per cent of the ONTC work force, and will be a significant blow to an area already hard-hit by plant closures and job losses.

The Ontario Government currently pays out an annual subsidy of approximately \$10 million to the ONTC. This is very modest when compared with the millions put into commuter services in the Toronto area. Part of the subsidy could be reduced by renegotiating the amount the ONTC pays to CN for the use of its tracks. While VIA only pays CN \$11 per mile, ONTC pays CN \$19 per mile, which amounts to \$2.5 million each year.

To paraphrase the Minister of Transportation, now is not the time to reduce passenger rail services in Northern Ontario. On the contrary, the ONTC could do a great deal to improve services, and attract additional ridership. These improvements include:

- improved rolling stock
- reduced travel time through full use of track speed limits
- increased training of dispatch

- staff
- an improved reservation system
- improved advertising

As a Northern member of the Ontario Legislature, I'm sure you recognize the importance of the ONTC in the North in terms of employment, transportation, and tourism. I hope that you will reconsider the planned reduction in services offered by the ONTC, and will provide additional funds to improve services, and attract more passengers.

I trust you will also continue to pressure the federal government to change its plans for VIA rail.

I am confident that with improvements, the ONTC can continue to offer an efficient, useful, and viable service for the people of Northern Ontario.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,  
 Gilles Pouliot, MPP  
 Lake Nipigon Riding



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### NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND OTHERS

All claims against the Estate of Mr. JOSEPH ARTHUR ALPHONSE LEMIEUX, late of the Township of Schreiber, in the District of Thunder Bay, who died on or about the 3rd day of January, 1986, and/or claims against the Estate of (Mrs.) GIOVANNA PERNNA LEMIEUX, late of the Township of Schreiber, in the District of Thunder Bay, who died on or about the 24th day of March, 1989, must be filed with the undersigned on or before the 9th day of February, 1990, after which time the undersigned will distribute the assets of the estate having regard only to the claims then filed.

DATED at Thunder Bay, Ontario, this 4th day of January, 1990.

MURRAY & COURTIS  
 Barristers and Solicitors  
 Suite 410, The Chapple Building  
 101 N. Syndicate Avenue  
 THUNDER BAY, Ontario  
 P7C 3V4

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## International Conference brings new ideas to Northern Ontario

The 1991 Winter Cities Conference in Sault Ste. Marie will receive a \$300,000 provincial grant, Northern Development and Mines Minister Rene Fontaine has announced.

"This high-profile international conference will bring new ideas to Northern Ontario and to its many participants, leading to the creation of innovative and exciting projects for future economic growth," Fontaine said.

The conference theme - sustainable development - will focus on new approaches for planning future economic strategies and growth. As part of the global community, those cities partici-

pating in the conference will play a leading role in sustainable development, which is a growing global and political concern.

Winter Cities Forum '91, taking place January 21-25, 1991, will bring together more than 500 winter-city delegates to exchange ideas on six major sub-themes: Industrial Innovation, Transportation and Communication; Recreation and Tourism; Health, Social and Cultural Services; Architecture and Urban Planning; Land Use - Water and Natural Resources; and Waste Management, Air and Water Pollution and Land Alienation.

## Lake Superior Board of Education News Release

The Lake Superior Board of Education's Regular Board Meeting #1/90 was held Tuesday, December 12th, 1989. After the meeting was called to order, minutes of previous meetings and expenditures for the months of October and November 1989 were acknowledged and approved.

The following resolutions dealing with personnel matters, were passed:

- resignation of Billie BAGDON, teacher, Terrace Bay Public School
- resignation of Corinne TOWNES, secretary, Board Office
- appointment of Hannah MILLER, part-time custodian, Lake Superior High School, Terrace Bay Campus

The Trustees passed 3 resolutions amending the Employee Housing Policy. The Trustees also

passed 2 resolutions adopting the Pay Equity Plans for the SEIU and Non-Union Employee Groups. A resolution to accept the 1989-90 school year busing contract with Trotter Bus Lines was approved. There was numerous discussions during the meeting, dealing with such topics as: staffing, Bill 194 - Smoking in the Work place, and bus safety.

Future meetings are scheduled as follows:

- January 16th Regular Board Meeting
- January 23rd Operations Committee Meeting
- January 30th Finance Committee Meeting
- February 6th Education Committee Meeting

Meetings are held in the Administration Office in Marathon starting at 7:00 p.m. The general public is welcome to attend.

### Environmental Sign



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## Men's Brier

The Sault Ste. Marie's Brier Committee of the Canadian Men's Curling Championship will use a \$15,000 provincial grant to help defray the costs of its opening ceremonies and banquet, Northern Development Minister Rene Fontaine has announced.

"The Brier will feature Northern Ontario and Sault Ste. Marie to the rest of Canada. I am pleased that my Ministry can assist with the staging of this event," said Fontaine.

The 1990 Brier will be held March 2 - 11. This major tourist event for Northern Ontario is expected to generate more than \$3 million for Sault Ste. Marie.

The Brier is a major sporting event and many local business people have given of their time or donated materials and funds to host it. The City of Sault Ste. Marie has contributed \$32,000 to the event and local fund-raising continues.

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has also committed \$50,000 toward a pre-event tourism marketing and promotion campaign.