

Local Railway Items from Ottawa Papers - 1981

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Last call for VIA northshore to Hull, Gatineau, Templeton, Masson-Buckingham

There is a certain irony to the call as it echoes through the nearly deserted Ottawa station, slicing through the early morning fog.

When VIA Northshore Number 170 began its four hour trek to Montreal at 7.30 a.m. Saturday, it was the beginning of the end.

For most of this century, the little passenger train has been as familiar to residents of rural West Quebec as the smell of morning coffee.

The train is the victim of Transport Canada's decision to reduce 20 per cent of VIA Rail's services across Canada. It has been the major, and in some cases, the only, transportation for many West Quebecers.

Lucie Chevrier, whose lively eyes and quick smile belie her 80 years, has been boarding the Northshore at papineauville almost once a week for the past 63 years to visit her sister in Montreal.

Now, she doesn't know now if she will go to Montreal as often.

"I guess I'll have to take the bus but it doesn't leave until noon," she said Saturday. "I'm very upset with the Liberals. They don't understand how important the train is to us."

For Claire papineau the end of the train is a disappointment. Riding the train has been a "tradition" for the past 40 years.

Papineau, who lives in Laval, was returning from a trip to Papineauville to visit her sisters.

"The bus is about double the price", she lamented. "And it takes much longer than the train. I'm so disappointed."

For others discontinuing the Northshore means more than longer travelling time to visit relatives.

Giselle Burke of Montebello has been taking the train to Bordeaux, just outside Montreal, for the last 12 years to visit her doctor.

She's not looking forward to taking the bus.

"My appointment is at 11 Saturday morning, but the bus doesn't leave until noon. I'll have to change the appointment or go to Bordeaux Friday night