News to come in the 19 March formal issue, 15#03A

**CN: AUTOPORT MELTDOWN**

9 March, Halifax. “**IT’S A DISASTER. SHIPS ARE BYPASSING US RIGHT NOW AS WE SPEAK,**” said Kevin Piper, president and business agent for ILA Local 269 in Halifax, about the failure to move cars at CN’s Autoport in Eastern Passage. CN agrees – but differs on blame. Piper said earlier that CN had 15,000 vehicles parked at various locations around the port, some 5,000 more than usual. {CBC}

**CN blames the weather**

'The North American East coast has suffered from an unseasonably long and cold period of adverse weather conditions, which have seriously impaired normal operations at Autoport’s Halifax facility,' wrote CN’s Mark Hallman. 'A portion of the facility is covered in ice. Consequently, many vehicles have ice halfway up the tires, making them impossible to move. As a domino, CN is finding it difficult to off-load vessels. CN continues to accept vessels at Autoport, but has made clear to customers that vessels may sit a couple days before CN has room to off-load the vehicles.' {e-mail to ANR&P correspondent Tom Peters 6.March.2015}

**ILA blames lack of empty railcars**

CN and management at Autoport are to blame for the backlog of imported vehicles at the Eastern Passage facility and not the weather, said Piper. “CN doesn’t like to bring in empty rail cars and I know that Autoport and the container terminals need empty rail cars. The issue in Halifax is the port is pretty heavily weighted on imports,” he said.

Piper cited a recent situation at the Ceres Container Terminal related to him by his sources that “there was 70,000 feet of grounded imports and that equates to about 14 miles of cargo sitting on the damn pier waiting for railcars.” And he said he has been informed that dwell times for containers sitting on the dock have

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**Common abbreviations:**
- BCLR - Bay Colony RR
- BML - Belfast & Moosehead Lake RR
- CBNS - Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Ry
- CCCR - Cape Cod Central RR
- CCCR - Claremont Concord RR
- CMAQ - congestion-mitigation or air quality (money from the US federal government for these purposes)
- CMOR - Central Maine & Quebec RR
- CNR - Canadian National Ry
- CNZ - Central New England RR
- ConnDOT - Connecticut Department of Transportation
- CP - Canadian Pacific Ry
- CSO - Conway Scenic RR
- CSRX - Conway Scenic Transportation (railroad)
- EMRY - see NB&M
- FHWA - Federal Highway Admin.
- FRA - Federal Rail Admin.
- FRTC - Fore River Transportation Co.
- FTA - Federal Transit Admin.
- GU - Grafton & Upton RR
- GWH - Genesee & Wyoming Inc
- HRRC - Housatonic RR
- MassDOT - Massachusetts Department of Transportation
- MBCR - Mass. Bay Commuter RR
- MBRX - Milford-Bennington RR
- MBTA - Mass. Bay Transportation Authority
- MC - Massachusetts Coastal RR
- MCER - Mass. Central RR
- MDOT - Maine Department of Transportation
- MERR - Maine Eastern RR
- MBA - Maine Maritime Academy
- MNA - Montreal and Southern RR
- MNY - see NB&M
- MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization
- MTC - Quebec Ministry of Transport
- NUAG - Naugatuck RR
- NBDOT - New Brunswick Department of Transportation
- NB&M - New Brunswick & Maine Railways (dba name) consisting of MNR Maine Northern Railway, EMRY Eastern Maine Railway, and NBSR New Brunswick Southern Railway
- NBSR – see NB&M
- NECR - New England Central RR
- NEGS - New England Southern RR
- NHCRR - New Hampshire Central RR
- NHDOT - NH Department of Transportation
- NHH - New Hampshire Northcoast RR
- NNEPRA - Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority
- NS - Norfolk Southern Ry
- NSDOT - Nova Scotia Department of Transportation
- NYA - New York & Atlantic Rwy
- NYNJ - New York New Jersey Railroad (PANYNJ subsidiary, former Cross-Harbor)
- PAR - Pan Am Railways
- PT - Port of Transportation
- PW - Providence & Worcester RR
- QCR - Quebec Central Ry
- RIDOT - Rhode Island Department of Transportation
- SLQ - St. Lawrence & Atlantic Ry (Québec)
- VTR - Vermont Transportation
- WACR - Windsor and Hantsport Ry
- WCR - Wachusett RR
- WIRR - Wallingford & Indian River Ry
been over 20 days. {Piper in discussions with Peters 9.March 2015}

But Hallman wrote, “CN’s ground count at Autoport was fine until the weather hit, so the claim [by Piper] is without merit.” {Hallman e-mail}

**Ceres lack of cars**

A source at Ceres wrote that the terminal has ‘a backlog that was created by two factors. First is the severe winter causing a lot of ice and snow around the rail tracks on the terminal. And secondly, CN’s new rules on not pulling or placing rail cars unless the rail tracks are completely clear of snow and ice.

'This winter has been the worst I have ever seen for snow and ice and CN’s new rule shut us down for days at a time.' The source said Ceres continues to work vessels. {e-mail to Peters 9.March.2015}

**Ships bypass; CN force majeure**

Piper says his concern is if these ships continue to bypass Halifax and find better service in other ports, they won’t return. He related that ship’s agent Colley Motorships of Montreal has had one of its vessels bypass Halifax because of the backlog and “there is potential for a Wallenius Wilhelmsen ship to bypass us later in the week. The delays are just outrageous,” he said.

He believes that agent Colley Motorships sent a vessel to Baltimore instead of Halifax to have vehicles railed to markets in Toronto, Chicago and other cities. The ILA spokesman that in the last two to three weeks of March there are vessels scheduled to call at Autoport every two to three days. {Piper in discussions with Peters}

Hallman wrote: "Autoport accordingly on [3 March] notified customers it was claiming temporary relief from its service obligations consistent with the Force Majeure provisions incorporated in their transportation contracts.

'In accordance with those Force Majeure provisions, Autoport has already undertaken specific measures to mitigate any adverse impact on customers. Specifically, in order to preserve, to the extent possible, the flow of traffic and the supply of vehicles into and out of the facility, Halifax operations has secured and continues to seek incremental off-site storage capacity, and employ additional (temporary) workforce to help alleviate the backlog. Autoport will also prioritize vehicle shipments for loading not encumbered by ice and snow, to improve manpower and port efficiencies. CN will review its Force Majeure measure on a weekly basis and may be in a position to lift it within two to three weeks,” Hallman said. {Hallman e-mail}

Halifax Port Authority's Lane Farguson wrote: 'The CN Autoport facility is 100% owned and operated by CN. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on any questions relating to the operation of that facility.'

{e-mail to Peters 9.March.2015}

**Who works the ships?**

Three large auto carriers at Autoport were caught in the logjam on 7 March. *Toscana*, with Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics as agent, was docked the 6th. NYK *Graceful Leader* was expected to leave port the 6th. NYK *Apollon Leader* was at anchorage waiting to be unloaded. Another vessel, *Green Cove*, was due in port the 7th. The last three listed Colley Motorships of Montreal their agent. {HPA website and Lane Farguson, HPA, in an e-mail to Peters. 6.March.2015}

Wallenius uses Logistec Stevedoring. Colley uses Ceres Halifax. All stevedores belong to ILA Local 269. CN workers move the cars from parking lots to autoracks. {Peters}

On 10 March, Halifax Port Authority listed the *Graceful Leader* as due on the 10th; Wallenius' *Figaro* due the 11th. {daily bulletin} Ship tracking shows *Green Cove* left Halifax on 10 March and is due in New York on 11 March. {ais}

**PAN AM: PROPANE CUSTOMER MOVES**

26 February, South Portland. *NGL PRESENTED PLANS TO RELOCATE ITS PROPANE TERMINAL IN RIGBY YARD* as it has long planned to do [see 14#04A], from the location at the International Marine Terminal soon to become an intermodal terminal [see 14#09B and photo]. At a city Planning Board workshop, planning
and fire officials asked NGL to make a variety of changes which would delay the public hearing on the proposal to 14 April at the earliest.

NGL will lease 10 acres from Pan Am for 20 years, according to Steve Puleo, South Portland planner, at the site of Pan Am's former roundhouse in Rigby, and build six 60,000-gallon tanks. The site will have 80,000 gallons more than the current six tanks in Portland holding 280,000 gallons.

**Advantages for South Portland**

Siting the facility in Rigby has several advantages, said Puleo:

- Currently propane cars are already going in or passing through Rigby with no oversight. A fixed site under regulatory control and monitoring is better (including state and federal), though that effort is “not really very well received by Pan Am.”
- The lease to NGL avoids pre-emption. “We don't want to go with another pre-empted facility.” [The Amerigas facility is such. Editor]

- Safety and fire control will require upgrading the hydrants and water, both within the 10 acres and leading to them. Puleo mentioned a new 12-inch main into Rigby, and 8-inch leads off it, bringing the hydrants “up to current standards” for not only NGL but the entire yard, though “we have not expected Pan Am to do anything.”

- South Portland has asked NGL to arrange for Amerigas to use the new terminal. That is not yet resolved.

- The recent severe snowstorms have stranded as many as 70 tank cars in Rigby Yard because Pan Am was unable to reach the Commercial Street terminal in Portland, Puleo said. A terminal right at Rigby would obviate that problem. {ANR&P discussion; Kelley Bouchard in Portland Press Herald 5.Mar.15}

**PEOPLE: MIKE RENNICE RETIRES**

Pioneer Valley Railroad and the New England railroad community will miss Mike Rennicke when he retires at the end of March. Mike was steadily forthcoming and helpful to me as I learned about railroading. More important, he spoke for, and worked on behalf of, Massachusetts railroads. As one might expect, PVRR will need two people to replace him.

Milton (Milt) Brill will become PVRR general manager. He has a 20-year background including CSX, G&W, and a mixture of multi-modal railroad derivatives.

PVRR has also hired a sales representative, Bryan Begley, to take over Mike's role in the marketing and sales side of the PVRR and sister transload/distribution company Railroad Distribution Services.

Mike writes he will 'be around probably causing trouble in Boston as there were a few battles we had not finished for the railroads in Massachusetts.'
Coverage
The newsletter covers the operating freight railroads and ports in New England, the Maritimes, and eastern Québec, as well as the government environment they function within. Coverage includes passenger rail and ships when relevant to freight operations.

Frequency and the e-bulletin
ANR&P appears weekly. We send a formal issue twice a month, via post or e-mail. Between the formal issues, we send out the e-bulletin, only by e-mail. All information in the e-bulletin (often updated which is indicated by blue type), along with more articles with timely news, is included in the formal issue.

Pricing
Subscriptions cost $495 for professionals, $125 per year for students, young and old. (Add $100/year for print issue.) Introductory prices available. The e-bulletin, sent by e-mail as needed between issues, is free of charge to all subscribers.

Advertising
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Purpose
Atlantic Northeast Rails & Ports, née Maine RailWatch (1994-1997) and later Atlantic RailWatch (1998-1999), is dedicated to the preservation and extension of the regional rail network. The editor believes that publishing news on railroads and ports spotlights needed action to preserve the rail network. The publication also imbues the region with a sense of an interdependent community, employing the network to move rail and port traffic. ‘No railroad is an island, entire onto itself.’

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