A semi-monthly trade newsletter dedicated to the preservation and extension of the rail network in the Atlantic Northeast.

Operating railroads + their intermodal facilities, ports, and government environment

**Issue 99:3  5 February 1999**

**Regional Issues**

NNE Rail: early May meeting?
PW: review of issues in RI, CT, MA.
NECR: To buy outparcels? Brigham permanent.
FTR: Amtrak mail, SLH operating ratio.
Excursion rail statistics: [At end of issue.]

**Connecticut**

CNZR: STB notice on Griffins line.
PW: Middletown Rail Council membership.

**Maine**

B&A: Huber Resource expansion.
GRS: Waterville intermodal traffic up.
SLR: NEPW expansion.
FTR: Maine Port Authority meeting.

**Massachusetts**

GRS: Hoosac tunnel work.
Brockton: site for NY/NJ distribution?
CSXT: corrected tables.

**New Hampshire**

Commuter: NRPC evaluating consultant bids.
CSRX: Ownership court suit.
SLR: Crown Vantage intermodal coming.
FTR: No RR bills printed. Salem track abandonment possibility.

**Rhode Island**

PW: see Regional.

**Vermont**

VRS: OMYA rail spur recommendation.
WACR: NECR to take over functions.

**Maritimes/Québec**

CBCN: DEVCO to be privatized. Passenger rail revival?
CFQ: Closing on Matapédia-Matane in February.
FTR: CN line gets fiber optic.

**Ports**

Boston: Clearing up Conley snafus, traffic up.
Halifax: Two new services. Visits to Massport and Quonset Point.
FTR: Montréal rail use, Portland reorganization.

**From the Publisher**

Favorite stories? The news on WACR - I think customers will be better off. Plus Heidi Eddins discussion of the PW.

Errata from the last issue, 22 January:
- The tables on the CSXT Massachusetts traffic had errors in the figures. New tables in this issue.
- Gillian Wood said Rockingham Terminal Inc. might become the property holder for the land used for the Sea-Land/Maersk terminal (page 10).
- Some issues went out with typos in the flyer on Battle.

Chop Hardenbergh

Next issue: 26 February

**Regional Issues**

**N. New England Rail Plan**

3 February, Burlington VT. A SUMMIT MEETING OF KEY POLICY MAKERS makes up the next step for the Conservation Law Foundation’s (CLF) effort to revive passenger rail across Northern New England. Mark Sinclair, point person for CLF, said he’s looking for a meeting in early May in New Hampshire attended by representatives of the governors of the three New England states, the DOTs, Amtrak, the FRA, and the Congressional delegations.

From the meeting he hoped a compact or cooperative mechanism would emerge which would look at the possible ridership of such a system, the capital costs, and sources of funds. In particular, as pointed out at the November 1998 regional meeting sponsored in part by CLF [see 3 December 1998 issue], the Northern line should be revived between Concord and White River Junction.

The Jeffords-Snowe bill or its successor in the US Congress [see 5 November 1998 issue] could provide a source of funds for the analysis. {ARW discussion}

**PROVIDENCE & WORCESTER**

3 February, Worcester. **SOME ISSUES FACING THE RAILROAD WERE ADDRESSED** during a discussion with Heidi Eddins, vice-president and general counsel.

**RHODE ISLAND**

**South Quay litigation**

In 1974, the railroad began reclaiming a 33-acre tide-flowed site in East Providence, filling it pursuant to a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Rhode Island Coastal Management Council. On 21 January 1997, the railroad received, from Rhode Island Superior Court, a confirmation of its ownership in fee simple absolute. The State of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Coastal Management Council appealed the ruling to the state Supreme Court, arguing that PW only had temporary use of the site. The latter heard oral argument in December, and Eddins expects a decision “shortly.”

**South Quay as an intermodal facility**

Should the Supreme Court decide the railroad has only a 50-year license to the property, PW still expects to proceed to build an intermodal facility. Does locating it only 30 miles from the three intermodal terminals in Worcester make sense?

Yes, replied Eddins. It will serve Rhode Island and southeast Massachusetts, in partnership with the railroad’s two terminals in Worcester. It lies only half a mile from I-195, which serves the coastal communities of Fall River, New Bedford, and Cape Cod. In the other direction one mile on I-195 reaches I-95, which can serve Rhode Island and the area immediately south of Boston.

The PW Worcester terminals now handle only containers, and primarily overseas traffic. The South Quay terminal could take on TOFC and other domestic traffic.

**Any marine traffic at South Quay?**

The railroad has no plan at this point for construction of the necessary dock, said Eddins. The railroad has sea access in Providence, New Haven and Quonset Point, as well as East Providence.

**What kind of clearance to South Quay?**

The railroad has eliminated all obstructions in Rhode Island to full doublestack service between Providence and Worcester. Three areas remain: the portion of the line in Massachusetts [see below], the line between Providence and Davisville [the subject of the state’s Freight Rail Improvement Project which will get underway soon - see 8 January issue], and the line between Providence and East Providence.

One obstruction remains in East Providence, a bridge at Waterman Avenue. Eddins expected to resolve that clearance in cooperation with the city.

**THE PW INTERMODAL TERMINALS**

The railroad owns two terminals which serve overseas traffic: Southbridge Street (located in downtown Worcester at company headquarters) and Wiser Avenue, located south of the city center. Together, they handled about 54,000 containers in 1998. All traffic is interchanged with Conrail only a short distance away. {Atlantic Northeast Rail and Marine Transport Review 1999}

**The NORAD autoport**

Located in Davisville at a site north of that considered for the container port [see 2 July 1998 issue for map], NORAD currently handles Subarus, both imported and produced domestically in Indiana, and some Chrysler products. Because of clearance considerations, the company cannot receive autos by rail. They are unloaded in the Westborough-Framingham and trucked to Davisville.

Tri-level autorack cars need clearance to 19’6”. With that, PW could forward the autoracks to Davisville from an interchange in Worcester. This could occur even before Massachusetts gets full doublestack clearance. Though obtaining the additional one foot of clearance in Massachusetts is not difficult, CSXT/Conrail already has 19’6” clearance to Worcester. The Barto reaching Davisville lies in the FRIP, which should be completed by 2002.

**CONNECTICUT**

**Re-opening the line to Hartford**

The railroad would like to complete the work in 1999, but, said Eddins, PW could not get the work done “with our own forces.” Work elsewhere already planned for 1999 would consume all PW’s track resources. She has therefore submitted a proposal to ConnDOT’s freight rail preservation program to share the costs of putting the material supplied by ConnDOT [rails and ties - see 3 December 1998 issue] in the ground. ConnDOT does own the line PW wants to re-open [see 8 October 1998 issue].

The railroad would like to complete work in 1999, though the work may require two construction seasons, said Eddins.

**Access to Fresh Pond NY**

**Background.** PW currently has trackage rights to haul aggregate from New Haven to Fresh Pond, Queens. During the process of getting approval for the Conrail splitup, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) directed CSXT and PW to “discuss” the possibility of expanded PW service on this route. On 19 November 1998, PW asked the STB to assign an administrative law judge to supervise a mediation process, because “other than mutually beneficial marketing proposals, CSX is unwilling to...
discuss substantive opportunities by P&W to compete with CSX over the New Haven route.’

In a reply on 9 December, CSX contended that ‘in court and Board proceedings, P&W has repeatedly violated its August 6, 1997 settlement agreement [see 11 September 1998 issue] with CSX. According to CSX, in exchange for valuable independent rate-making authority between New Haven and New York City [with CSX doing the haulage], P&W pledged unconditional support for the Conrail transaction. Despite P&W’s litigation, CSX states that it has continued to negotiate with P&W relative to mutually beneficial arrangements over the New Haven route. CSX asks the Board to clarify that unrestricted trackage rights on behalf of P&WE, over CSX’s objection, is not what the Board intended when it imposed the condition.’

On 18 December, the STB denied P&W’s request, agreeing that it did not intend the ‘prospect of valuable commercial rights going to P&W, over CSX’s opposition.’ CSX stated it did not intend to cancel the haulage rights agreement of 1997 with PW, which the STB stated met its desire to have ‘mutually beneficial arrangements to increase competition. Accordingly, CSX will be bound to its commitment not to cancel the agreement based upon P&W’s conduct up to this point.’

Eddins comments. “We will respect the decision and continue to work with CSX.”

New Haven Station

Background. As a result of the formation of Conrail and various decisions connected with it, in 1982 PW was awarded by a US Special Court the right to acquire ‘New Haven Station’ if Conrail withdraws from or abandons or discontinues, freight service at that location.

The term New Haven Station describes the freight facilities in New Haven and Cedar Hill Yard. PW contended that the sale of Conrail triggered this award, and PW now has the right to acquire New Haven Station.

In its initial decision in July 1998, the STB denied PW’s contention [see 30 July 1998 issue], stating that CSXT could substitute for Conrail without triggering PW’s rights. PW asked the STB to stay the decision, but the STB declined. PW then commenced a proceeding before the Special Court, whose function is now held by the US District Court for the District of Columbia. It has also filed a petition for review of the STB decision in the Court of Appeals.

PW returned to the Board for clarification, noting that Conrail in its recent pleadings in the appellate proceeding holds that the STB decision did not extinguish PW rights. ‘Thus, should CSX subsequently abandon or discontinue freight service at that facility…PW’s residual rights to acquire the property…would be reactivated.’

The STB agreed with the Conrail stance, stating that it did not override PW’s rights under the 1982 order.

PW expects its litigation with CSX to be resolved.

Why did Conrail hold on west of New Haven?

In response to ARW musing on this question [see 8 January issue], Eddins noted that Conrail had wanted PW to become a Conrail Express partner, under which short lines handle Conrail traffic as Conrail’s in return for a fee. “We did not want to play that role.” Possibly in return, Conrail hung onto the segment rather than selling it to PW in 1996.

[Another rail source, who declined to be identified, surmised that Conrail knew if it let PW west of New Haven, some of the traffic CSO was handling from west of New Haven would go to PW. This would lower the amount of traffic, and hence the price, on the New Haven-Springfield MA line, something Conrail wanted to avoid as it sold the line to RailTex.]

Cedar Hill Yard

Due to Amtrak’s construction of the high-speed rail line between New York and Boston, including changes to the Mill River interlocking, PW’s operations in New Haven have been disrupted. Amtrak and PW are working with CSX to utilize the Cedar Hill Yard in North Haven to solve the operational constraints to the freight railroads.

Port of New Haven reconstruction

ConnDOT will reconstruct rail access to New Haven piers [see 5 November 1998 issue]. PW has recently submitted its proposed design configuration to ConnDOT, and is awaiting a reply to the suggestion. The configuration will reduce the cost to put the rail line back.

MASSACHUSETTS

Expansion of intermodal terminals

The railroad plans to expand its Wiser Avenue terminal in Worcester, to take advantage of growth opportunities [see 24 September 1998]. The CSXT takeover of Conrail traffic in New England will increase container traffic at both, and give more impetus to adding the third terminal in East Providence.

Doublestack clearance

As noted before, the Commonwealth is still searching for the funding to clear the entire state to full doublestack. Both Massport and EOTC are short of funds to complete the commitments they made to the project [see 5 November 1998 issue].

Eddins renewed her call [see 11 September 1998 issue] for the Commonwealth to proceed in segments, doing the clearance at least as far as Worcester because the funding for that work is set. From there, she asserted, PW in cooperation with the Massachusetts Highway Department could remove the obstacles on the PW’s main line in the Blackstone Valley. The highway department is working on bridges, and the railroad is looking at undercutting. [ARWdiscussion.3.Feb.99;STBdecisionsFinanceDocketNo.33388No.10118.Nov.98andNo.10918.Dec.98[thislatterdecisionmostlydiscussedCPaccesstoNewYorkCity]-singlequotesallcomefromtheSTBdecisiontext]

NEW ENGLAND CENTRAL

2 February. CANADIAN NATIONAL IS WORKING ON A SALE OF ITS OUTPARCELS along the railroad. When CN sold the ROW to RailTex in 1995, it reserved ownership of those
parcels not needed to run the railroad. For some time, CN has had the outparcels on the market. Mike Brigham, NECR president, said RailTex and at least one other party are interested in the purchase. CN had not given any deadline to complete the deal. No sources contacted by ARW could relate whether the sale would include the CN pier in New London [see 3 December 1998 issue].

BRIGHAM PERMANENT
Brigham took over for Dale Carlstrom as president of NECR in November [see 5 November 1998 issue], intending to stay only about three months. However, on 9 January he became permanent chief. {ARW discussion 3.Feb.99}

Any sale of property in Connecticut would require ConnDOT to relinquish its right of first refusal, according to Ray Godcher, rail planner, even though the parcels were no longer used for railroad purposes. He anticipated that with respect to the outparcels ConnDOT not want to buy them.

No sale of railroad
Although reports circulate that RailTex is selling off some of its 30+ railroads, Brigham dismissed speculation that NECR is among those. To refute that, he noted that his railroad is taking over the operation of WACR [see Vermont]. {ARW discussions 2&3.Feb.99}

FOR THE RECORD:
REGIONAL
AMTRAK MAIL BUSINESS FROM SPRINGFIELD. As part of freight contracts signed in January, expected to bring in more than $20 million a year in additional income, Amtrak expanded an existing agreement to move mail between Philadelphia and Springfield MA in the East and Los Angeles and Oakland CA. {AP}

SLH IS MAKING MONEY. The CP subsidiary had an operating ratio of 110% in 1995, and has now reached 90% in 1998. The railroad made a profit of about $70 million on revenues of $700 million, versus the loss of about $65 million on revenues of $650 million in 1995. The credit for the turnaround goes to President Jacques Coté, described by shippers and co-workers as “innovative.” {Toronto Globe and Mail 11.Jan.99}

The Northwest Rail Council said it would set up two subcommittees, reported Hugh Cox, the chair [see 3 December issue]:

Freight
Heidi Eddins, chair v-p, Providence&Worcester
James Nolan Stone Container, Portland
John Howell Primary Steel, Middletown
Ed Kalinowski first selectman, Portland
Bill Warner Planning & Devel., Middletown
town planner, Cromwell
Craig Minor town council member, Rocky Hill
town manager, Rocky Hill
Barbara Gilbert
Barbara Surillo
Dave Conrad chief mechanical officer, Valley RR

Tourist
Rob Bradway, chair track foreman, Valley Railroad
Staci Roy general manager, Valley Railroad
Charlotte Pike Deep River Navigation (tour boat)
Keith Ainsworth first selectman, Haddam
Max Miller P&W, formerly Connecticut Central
Jim Goodwin retired from Valley Railroad

Next steps
The names of those nominated will go to the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce executive committee for approval, since the Council serves as part of the Chamber.

Those concerned are also trying to set up a meeting with a member of US Senator Christopher Dodd’s staff, since Dodd assisted in obtaining language in TEA-21 authorizing $10 million for improvement of the line between Old Saybrook and Hartford. The funds apparently form part of the ‘New Starts’ section of TEA-21, which can only be used for passenger rail. Ray Godcher, ConnDOT rail planner, reported that $500,000 in planning funds were passed by Congress in the US DOT appropriations bill in autumn 1998 for the rail line. It requires a 20% local match.

However, given that passenger rail will not prove viable for some years, Godcher suggested that advocates work to reform the language, letting funds be used for work to reopen the line for freight initially. {ARW discussions 3.Feb.99}

CONNECCTICUT RAILROADS

CENTRAL NEW ENGLAND
28 January, THE STB PUBLISHED NOTICE OF RESUMPTION of service on the Griffins Industrial Track from milepost 0.0 in Hartford to milepost 8.7 in Griffins [see 8 January issue]. CNZR applied for a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41. {Finance Docket No.33680}

MAINE RAILROADS

BANGOR & AROOSTOOK SYSTEM
2 February, Old Town. HUBER RESOURCES CONTINUES TO SETUP A RAIL-SERVED MANUFACTURING COMPLEX in Millinocket on 380 acres, according Jonathan Ford of Huber. Announced in December, the Huber Forest Products and Technology Center has two tenants and will soon have a third:

- Huber is starting up a hardwood merchandising facility which
it designed and built. It gauges and machines whole hardwood trees into saw logs and chippable material.

- The Gardner Chip Mills LLC, a subsidiary of W.T.Gardner & Sons, chips Huber’s and others’ wood.

- The new tenant, SWP Industries of St.Stephen NB, will spend roughly $4.5 million to build a cedar products manufacturing facility.

**Rail usage**
The Center has a siding served by the B&A. Inbound material consists of chips and treelength wood. Outbound consists of the sawlogs, which go to saw mills.

**Huber holdings**
Huber Resources is held by J.M.Huber. It manages about 320,000 acres statewide owned by J.M.Huber, some 50,000 of which are located near the mill in Millinocket. SWP will draw on hardwood from Huber lands as well as other lands. {Bangor Daily News 18.Dec.98; ARW discussion 2.Feb.99}

**FOR THE RECORD:**
**MAINE**
THE MAINE PORT AUTHORITY will next meet on 23 February. Donna Fricke, one of the board members, hoped that by then the legislative intent on the Calais branch will have become more clear [see 22 January issue]. The Authority may well oversee efforts to revive the Calais branch as part of its portfolio. {ARW discussion 3.Feb.99}

**GUILFORD RAIL SYSTEM**
2 February, Waterville. **THE INTERMODAL TRAFFIC IS CONTINUING TO GROW.** David Fink, GRS executive vice-president, said that with the clearance work nearly done on the GRS line in Massachusetts and Conrail’s track work done for the year, the two railroads are providing consistently on-time service. “The train leaves Waterville regularly every night.” As a result, the service had attracted some new customers.

The same applied to the NS service; the consistent times and traffic growth had permitted the dedicated train between Ayer and Mechanicville [see 8 January 1999]. {ARW discussion}

**ST.LAWRENCE & ATLANTIC**
3 February. **NEW ENGLAND PUBLIC WAREHOUSE IS CONTINUING TO EXPAND.** Chief Don Warming said the company now had nine facilities, mostly dedicated to the paper mills. Of these, only those on the SLR used rail to any extent. NEPW did open a warehouse in Fairfield just over a year ago which has GRS rail. S.D.Warren’s Somerset mill in Hinckley uses the warehouse to store dry pulp and paper, but only drays the product to and from the mill, never directly outbound. Rarely, the mill has used rail to move the product.

**South Paris**
Here at the headquarters of NEPW, Warming is adding a temporary Rubb building to handle paper storage. “I think if you look across the state, you’ll find the paper warehouses full.” Low paper prices have induced the mills to store paper, rather than sell it. The Rubb building has the advantage of portability: NEPW can move it to its most needed location.

**Mechanic Falls**
The new facility of 50,000SF [see photo in 16 July issue] received an expansion of an additional 30,000SF in October 1998, said Warming. It handles finished rolls of paper only, but he is looking at adding food products brought from the West coast. The site has 35 acres with 2,500 feet on an SLR siding.

**Food products and Hannaford Brothers**
Warming spent 20 years at Hannaford Brothers, and then put in more time providing a rail-served warehouse for the company in South Portland. However, he pulled out of the Portland area in 1994 after becoming overextended. Hannaford Brothers no longer uses rail. Spokesperson Beryl Wolf said the company’s own trucking company handled all transport, though sometimes product is picked up after arriving in Boston by rail. {ARW discussions 3.Feb.99}

**MASSACHUSETTS RRs**

**CSXT MAIN LINE - CORRECTION**
*Note: Some errors crept into the tables for this article in the 22 January issue. Herewith the corrected figures:*

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<th>Boston-Albany</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coal/bulk</strong></td>
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<td><strong>General merchandise</strong></td>
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<td><strong>inbound</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PVRR</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCLR</td>
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<td><strong>Overall total</strong></td>
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**Interchange traffic between GRS and Conrail**
<table>
<thead>
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<th>NESE</th>
<th><strong>inbound</strong></th>
<th><strong>outbound</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21,600</td>
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</table>
SENE 10,000 -
LASE - 10,000
SELA 21,600 -
ML-438 9,000 -
ML-439 - 40,600 31,600

Intermodal loadings for the line’s six facilities 1998 units
Boston/Beacon Park 40,000
Worcester - Conrail 60,000
Worcester - PW (two terminals) 48,000
Palmer - MCER 10,000
West Springfield 20,000
TOTAL 178,000

{Atlantic Northeast Rail and Marine Transport 1999}

FOR THE RECORD: MASSACHUSETTS

THE HOOSAC TUNNEL WORK SHOULD END THIS MONTH, according to GRS Executive Vice-president David Fink. Crews are undercutting the last piece, about 150 feet of track. Elsewhere on the west end, the last barrier, a state bridge in Fitchburg, was recently removed. The resulting 19′6″ clearance will make GRS competitive with Conrail, but will not gain GRS the Ford traffic directly from Mechanicville NY [see CSXT, 21 January issue]. However, Fink commented, other auto traffic can be attracted.

{ARWdiscussion} .......... BROCkTON, MA WAS IDENTIFIED BY THE NY/NJ PORT AUTHORITY, along with Albany NY, Camden NJ, and Harrisburg PA as a possible site for inland distribution centers handling port traffic. Chris Ward, PA Chief of Policy and External Affairs, identified the network - a system of freight centers that would be fed by big shipments from the NY/NJ port - as the prerequisite to securing the last 15% of the huge freight growth potential (a five-to-six-fold increase) available to the Port by 2040. The Port Authority claims it would like to serve them with freight trains, but also frequently asserts that trucks will inevitably dominate goods movement for the foreseeable future. {TriState Transportation Campaign release 1.98}

NH RAILROADS

COMMUTER RAIL - NASHUA

3 February. THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION IS EVALUATING PROPOSALS from five consulting firms to assist in determining the feasibility of commuter service to Boston. According to the Request for Proposals (RFP), the project is listed as a potential New Start in TEA-21 [see 18 December 1998 issue]. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) intends, in spring 1999, to submit an application in the competition for some of the funds.

The firm selected will conduct an independent analysis to confirm the costs of the extension service to Nashua and possibly to Manchester. The firm will:

- review previous cost estimates,
- conduct a field inspection of MBTA track between Lowell MA and the New Hampshire line, and GRS trackage between the line and Merrimack.
- describe corridor characteristics, including structures and drainage; and
- ‘identify the minimum level of capital improvements to the corridor needed to reliably operate Class III passenger rail service for the service alternatives under consideration.’

Andrew Singelakis, NRPC executive director, said he expected to decide among the bidders within the next couple of weeks.

Guilford participation

David Fink, GRS executive vice-president, noted that the idea for the commuter service was spawned in North Billerica. GRS offered to operate such a service some years ago. Now, if New Hampshire wanted to select GRS to run it, GRS would do it; if the MBTA were selected, “that’s ok too.”

Will GRS support the bill in the New Hampshire legislature to limit liability to $75 million? “Anything that will help the commuter service and prevent liability for our company, we’re for.” {text of RFP; ARW discussion}

CONWAY SCENIC

13 January. A CONTROVERSY OVER OWNERSHIP OF THE RAILROAD reached the light of day. In October, Russ Seybold, CSRX general manager, filed a petition for specific performance in Carroll County Superior Court against Morrell Corporation and the other shareholders of the railroad. He amended the petition on 13 January.

Background

The railroad currently has only 300 shares of stock. Seybold holds 100, William Levy (CSRX treasurer) 100, Katharine Reed (vice-president) 80, and her son-in-law Stefan Karnopp (assistant secretary) 20. Levy’s interest is managed and exercised by Ronald Collins. Under a 1990 agreement, each shareholder agreed to offer the others first refusal in the case of a sale.

Seybold’s complaint alleges that at a special meeting of the shareholders on 30 July 1998, Seybold learned that Morrell Corporation, the owner of Storyland in Glen, was proposing to buy the railroad at $4,000 per share, or a total of $1.2 million. Seybold contends that the board of directors had already consented to sell to Morrell, and Morrell agreed to sign the sale contract.

Current stance

Defendants stated that Seybold made no effort to contact the other shareholders to negotiate on the sale, prior to filing his petition for specific performance.

According to information in support of the defendant’s motion to dismiss, Seybold declined to sell his shares to Morrell, thus Morrell made no offer to sell the shares. Defendants argue that without an offer to sell, there is no enforceable agreement to
sell the stock, and hence the right of first refusal is not triggered. [Presumably the lawsuit will linger while parties gather evidence and eventually wind up in a hearing on the question.] {Loren Billings in Conway Daily Sun 23 Jan.99}

**ST. LAWRENCE & ATLANTIC**

1 February, Berlin. The Proposed Intermodal Facility at Crown Vantage remains a possibility. SLR President Matt Jacobson said in January the railroad was waiting for Crown Vantage to make a couple of improvements.

On this day, Crown Vantage Traffic Manager Carl Ramsdell said the mill and the railroad had settled on a site for the facility. Finding one which avoided underground piping and other obstacles did not prove easy. The mill still must move some wires, and the railroad would then lay a short extension of track. {ARW discussion}

On 3 February, Standard & Poor's lowered its ratings on Crown Vantage Inc and its wholly owned subsidiary, Crown Paper Co. All ratings remain on CreditWatch with negative implications, where they were placed 23 September 1998. The downgrade reflects difficult market conditions that have resulted in a further weakening of the Crown's financial profile. Crown announced an operating loss for the full year 1998 and noncash pretax restructuring charges totaling $164 million in the fourth quarter of 1998, primarily for asset writedowns associated with its Berlin and Gorham NH mills. {Reuters}

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**FOR THE RECORD:**

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

The Two Railroad Bills Proposed for legislative action [one on liability and one on taxation - see 21 January issue] are not yet drafted by Legislative Services. {Webster website 3 Feb.99}

GRS Anticipates Abandoning most of the Salem Industrial Track [see 8 October issue], per a legal ad, between milepost 4.65 and milepost 7.6, as well as most of the Manchester end of the former Manchester and Lawrence branch, between Engineering station 2474+75 and 2780+36. [The numbers in the engineering station represent the footage from a zero point. Thus 2474+75 means 247,475 feet or 46.87 miles from a zero point in Boston.] This would leave GRS with a stub from the main line to Oak Street [see 19 November 1998 issue].

The announcement was made in connection with the annual release of the railroad’s system map. Under STB rules, the railroad must show routes it anticipates abandoning in the next three years. According to the STB’s Nancy Beiter, if a railroad does not list a section, it cannot initiate a full abandonment proceeding. However, it may abandon through the simpler processes. {Manchester Union Leader 29 Jan.99; ARW discussions 2&3 Feb.99}

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**RHODE ISLAND RRs**

[See PW comments in Regional.]

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**VERMONT RAILROADS**

**VERMONT RAIL SYSTEM**

3 February, Middlebury. The OMYA Rail Spur Could Make Financial Sense, according to a report delivered to the Vermont General Assembly on 14 January by VAOT. Completed by R.L. Banks & Associates and DuBois & King [see 22 October 1998 issue] under the supervision of VAOT’s Scott Bascom, it evaluated 11 different methods to move marble from a quarry in Middlebury to the OMYA processing facility in Florence [see 4 June 1998 issue].

Proposed future OMYA operations

Due to the quality of marble, Middlebury now supplies a majority of the stone used at Florence. The quarry produced 250,000 tons in the early 1980s, passed 500,000 tons several years ago, and would, if permission is received for transport, supply about one million tons five to ten years from now. Trucks, about 25,000 trips per year, currently move this material; the number of trips would nearly double in five years.

In 1998, OMYA sought permission to expand its truck trips between Middlebury and Florence, from the current 85 truck round trips per day. It received from the local district board only 2/3rds of the trips it wanted, and is appealing this ruling to the Vermont Environmental Board.

The proposed rail operation

OMYA currently uses rail outbound from Florence, using about 1,000 rail cars at any given time. It paid Vermont Railway nearly $11 million in 1997, a major part of which VTR then divided to other railroads participating in the marble moves.

VTR’s ‘light density traffic base’ [it moved 14,314 (originating 1431) cars over its 132 miles of road, giving 108 carloads per mile, below the regional average of 121 carloads per mile. Atlantic Northeast Rail and Marine Transport Review 1999] enables it only to maintain its tracks and not to significantly upgrade them, despite pouring nearly one-third of its revenues back into the track (this is twice the ratio of the major railroads). OMYA is already Vermont Railway’s largest customer of outbound product shipments; adding transport revenues from inbound material would strengthen the carrier.

Results of the study
One route for the rail will cost less, in total annual expenditures, than the all-truck route. That determination indicates that the annual rail costs would come in $2 million less than the annual truck costs. The difference would pay off the cost of building the rail spur. [The calculation does not assign a value to the benefit of less pollution.]

The MOU parties
In October, six entities signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to pursue the building of the rail spur: VAOT, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Vermont Railway, OMYA, and the Conservation Law Foundation [see box for some terms].

What happens next: the Act 250 appeal
Mark Sinclair of the Conservation Law Foundation, said his organization had agreed not to oppose the OMYA appeal. The Environmental Board often overturns the decision at the district level. The hearing at the state level begins anew [or as we lawyers put in, de novo]; no preference is accorded the district decision.

The parties opposing OMYA, which include the innkeepers of Brandon and the Town of Brandon, submitted the report as evidence in the new hearing, according to Sinclair. The Board may well grant OMYA the increase in truck traffic pending completion of the spur, believed Sinclair.

MOU TERMS
The text of the MOU, dated 8 October 1998, appears in the three-volume study by Banks et al. Some interesting points:

The parties ‘believe that construction of a rail spur appears to be the preferred alternative and will use good faith efforts actively to promote a rail spur so that construction is completed in less than five years, (a) subject to the availability and satisfaction of funding, planning, and environmental permitting requirements and other contingencies, and (b) barring studies that indicated that a rail spur is not economically feasible or is not the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.’

Within six months of its date, VAOT will develop ‘a Project action plan and schedule for completing necessary studies, information, and plans for the project that, provided the Vermont General Assembly concurs, will lead to completion of the project within five years.’

If the rail spur is constructed, OMYA will use it, except in the event of an emergency, service delay, or other events during which rail service may not be available.

CLF agreed not to oppose OMYA’s request for increased truck traffic during the term of the MOU (five years), as long as ‘there is substantial compliance with this MOU.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Initial Capital (millions)</th>
<th>Annual Expenses low</th>
<th>Annualized Capital low</th>
<th>Total costs annualized low</th>
<th>Alt.1 All rail route A-1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No build OMYA transport cost</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$3,860,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$3,860,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct accel. lane 0.530</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>30,500</td>
<td>45,480</td>
<td>50,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont highway damage 240,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL 0.530</td>
<td>$4,125,000</td>
<td>30,500</td>
<td>45,480</td>
<td>4,150,500</td>
<td>$26.360 $1,860,000 $1,377,500 $2,069,000 $3,240,000 $3,930,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WASHINGTON COUNTY RR - RIP
4 February, Montpelier. **THE RAILROAD AGREED TO HAND OVER OPERATION TO NECR** in a set of agreements signed this day by VAOT.

**FACTS ON WACR**
The railroad runs over 14 miles of state-owned track from Montpelier Junction through Barre. CSF Acquisitions, the company owned by Clyde Forbes of Trenton FL which also owns the Lamoille Valley (LVRC), the New Hampshire and Vermont, and the Twin States, acquired the railroad in 1993. Forbes agreed to operate WACR in return for receiving forgiveness of $100,000 per year of LVRC indebtedness, and receiving $50,000 per year toward track maintenance.

In 1997, WACR reported 125 carloads. For 1998, Bombardier expected 20 inbound shells and about four outbound completed cars. Allen Lumber, the only other customer, receives about three boxcars a week of treated lumber. *(Atlantic Northeast Rail and Marine Transport Review 1999)*

John Dunleavy, Vermont assistant attorney general, said the engine house fire in June 1998, and the concomitant destruction of the railroad’s two locomotives, accelerated a decline which had begun earlier. Because of a lack of personnel, the railroad had not taken advantage of the $50,000 per year which the state had agreed to pay toward maintenance on the line [see 13 August 1998 issue].

Trying to replace the engine house
VAOT as the owner of the line and the engine house did carry fire insurance, which would pay a little more than the $187,000 actual cash value of the property. Problems emerged with the proposed rebuild, though. The City of Montpelier was not happy to have the engine house there. Plus, its location in an historic district would have required use of wooden clapboards rather than a less expensive siding. The state was balking, Dunleavy said, at building in a new location because of all the permitting involved.

Either way, the state would end up paying “several hundred thousand” dollars more than the actual cash value. So it began to explore other options. During December and January it negotiated, successfully, with Forbes and NECR.

Advantages of NECR
Having NECR handle the switching of the former Montpelier and Wells River trackage makes sense from several viewpoints, noted Dunleavy:

- NECR can station a switcher at Montpelier Junction, which could get servicing elsewhere on the NECR line, obviating the need for a Montpelier engine house. This will leave the city pleased.
- Bombardier and other customers will get better service because NECR has the capability to keep the track repaired. The customers will also have one less railroad in the logistics chain.
- The state will save hundreds of thousands of dollars by not rebuilding the engine house.
- NECR will also have the chance to attract other customers. Brigham felt optimistic that it could do so.

The actual transaction
Under the documents, Forbes is assigning his rights under the lease and operating agreement to NECR. VAOT will forgive the final $100,000 debt installment. VAOT has agreed to pay NECR the $50,000 track maintenance [see box] and an added subsidy of $105/car for the first 200 cars.

RailTex will directly ask the STB for permission to assume the WACR lease. *(ARW discussion 2&4.Feb.99)*

M ARITIM ES/QUÉBEC RR s

CAPE BRETON AND CN
28 January, Glace Bay. **THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF MINES ANNOUNCED PRIVATIZATION OF DEVCO**, the railroad customer which produces coal for the Nova Scotia Power Company. The development will not significantly affect CBCN traffic, because it will continue to move foreign coal to NSPC plants via rail. [More in a future issue.] *(ARW discussion with Peter Touesnard, CBCN general manager, 4.Feb.99)*

4 February, Sydney. **TWO EFFORTS TO REVIVE PASSENGER RAIL HERE** are apparently occurring simultaneously.

Sydney-based effort
The long-awaited study [see 19 March 1998] on the feasibility of reviving rail has apparently been released by BCA Holdings, which commissioned it. According to Charlie Palmer of the Silver Dart Railway Association, the study has gone to the MP for the area, Peter Mancini. Mancini will release it after the stakeholders involved have seen it.

Both Nova Scotia DOT and CBCN report enquiries made recently on behalf of those doing the study. Palmer voiced the hope that following the release of the report, his Association would be invited to provide input on the next steps.

VIA-based effort
Palmer reported that equipment which lays over in Halifax on Tuesday and Wednesday from the Ocean might be used for a weekly tourist operation on the scenic route between Halifax and Sydney. The consist would be one or two coaches and a dome car at premium prices. This could lead to a more frequent general public service and an excursion run in connection with 35 cruise ships expected in Sydney, Cape Breton this summer and fall. *(ARW discussion with Palmer as well as CBCN and NSDOT*
26 January, Montréal. **THE CFQ SYSTEM WILL ACQUIRE A FOURTH RAILWAY** by mid-February, according to Pierre Martin, system spokesperson. CFQ may merge the new railway with others it already owns, or it may set up a new line under the tentative name ‘Matapédia -Matane Railway.’ The acquisition does not include trackage rights to Québec City. These would permit the CFQ railroads on the south shore direct access to its north shore railroad, Charlevoix, but Martin said the rights were not necessary. 

Acquisition of Cogema
Martin noted that the ferry service between Matane and Baie-Comeau, which CFQ wants to buy [see 22 January issue], is owned by 225 individuals in the Baie-Comeau area as well as by CN. Among them are members of the Jean Fournier family. Gestion Jean Fournier, a private company involved in trucking in Baie-Comeau and the regional airline, is one for several owners of CFQ. [More in a future issue.] **{ARW discussion}**

FOR THE RECORD:
QUÉBEC AND MARITIMES
FIBER OPTIC IS COMING TO THE REGION, along the CN freight line between Quebec City and Halifax. Worldwide Fiber, a separate firm, will install it and then sell or lease this capacity to communication companies. At the same time CN will replace its existing above-ground signal system (wood poles & wires) with buried cables. The current World War II vintage system is prone to breakdowns especially in ice or wind storms. **{Transport 2000 Hotline}**

ATLANTIC NORTHEAST PORTS

BOSTON
2 February. **THE PORT IS WORKING OUT KINKS IN THE OPERATION OF CONLEY TERMINAL.** The Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) asked for an outside evaluation of the terminal operation from Vickerman Zachary Miller, consultants based in Reston VA.

Michael Leone, who was appointed as Massport's maritime director in November after Ralph Cox stepped down in July 1998, described the process. During October and November, John Vickerman interviewed people from the various groups involved in the Conley operation: the authority's staff, labor and port users, ocean carriers, and truck lines. He found several problems, which Massport began immediately to address. The final report emerged in December. **{ARW discussion}**

Report contents
As related in the *Journal of Commerce*, Vickerman Zachary Miller, a subsidiary of TranSystems Corporation of Kansas City, MO, found a long list of faults following the closure of the Moran Terminal in April 1998 for containers, and consolidation of the container operations at Conley.

‘Customers do not know who specifically is in charge of the [Conley] terminal operations -- total chaos from the customer's perspective,’ the report said. ‘In general, there seemed to be a consensus that the organization of the facility was nebulous at best.’ The study does not mince words in assessing the shortcomings of personnel, infrastructure and equipment.

"The report has a negative tone because that's what we asked for," said Jeremy Crockford, a Massport spokesman. "We wanted to know what wasn't working so we could fix it," Mr. Crockford said.

Some efficiency problems identified by the consultants stem from differences at the terminals. Conley was always an "all-wheeled" operation, where containers were moved and stored on chassis, while Moran was a grounded operation where boxes were stacked. The result of the merger at Conley has been a hybrid, with a computerized terminal operating system that is too complex and slow.

Despite a $50 million capital-improvement program at Conley several years ago, the consultants found that poor pavement at the terminal was unable to handle stacked containers. Empty boxes also are scattered everywhere without organization, the report said.

Efficiency was rated below average, while two older container cranes were more productive than two new ones that cost Massport some $35 million. The report also cited "numerous safety issues," including complaints about chassis that are nearly 20 years old.

A new gate facility opened last year has never been fully functional, the study said. One unidentified carrier interviewed by the consultants called Conley "one of the most expensive and least productive terminals in their system." Lack of training, skills and service-oriented attitudes were also cited. **{Michael Lelyveld in Journal of Commerce 1.98}**

The hybrid operation
Leone explained that prior to consolidation, Conley was handled by a private operator, John T. Clark [long-time operator at Portsmouth before Bulkloader won the operating contract in 1997]. The lines involved in the Vessel-Sharing Agreement (VSA) [Maersk, Sea-Land, OOL, and P&O-Nedloyd] preferred a wheeled operation, though they had responsibility for providing all the chassis.

At Moran, on the other hand, the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) [slots for ACL, Hyundai, and Polish Ocean Line] used a stack operation. While this means the carrier did not need to invest in chassis, it does require more labor because of the need to move the boxes twice - or more often if the hostler needs to move one box to get at another. The stacked operation also required more reinforced concrete. SPM, the feeder operation, uses a stacked service.

Following consolidation, each shipping line continued to
use its own box movement system, so the labor force at Conley had to one day run wheeled operation, and another day a stacked operation. This meant less-than-perfect operation while all were learning. Similarly, personnel had to learn the new gate operation.

**Optimistic conclusion of report**
The study concluded on an optimistic note:

While the current situation at Conley is less than ideal, with a variety of issues to work on, the interviews conducted were far from negative. To the contrary, most interviews conducted had a tenor of cooperation and positive potential for the future.

All of the shipping lines interviewed expressed a desire to remain in Boston and to work with Massport to improve the situation at Conley.

The trucking representatives indicated that truck turn times at the terminal had improved over the past few months and their comments were generally upbeat.

The meetings with labor were initially cautious, but both meetings ended on positive notes, with what we feel were candid, positive discussions on labor’s contribution to the terminal.

It is our impression that there is desire among all stakeholders involved at Conley to improve the current situation, which is critical. We feel that with the right improvement plan the relations at Conley can be improved and productivity increased.

Leone said that if the port can follow through on the suggestions, “we’ll be able to handle all the cargo we handle now in a very competitive fashion, and we will have the ability to grow.” Much of the traffic from New England now goes to New York and Montréal. “With an efficient terminal we’ll be able to capture more of the New England market.”

**What about rail to the Midwest?**
The port is still working on attracting cargo which would land at Conley, be drayed to the Conrail/CSX intermodal terminal at Beacon Park, and be railed to the Midwest. But to accomplish that best, the rail line must have doublestack clearance, which will not happen soon [see Massachusetts].

**Possible bulk and breakbulk cargo**
Leone said the port is looking to attract this kind of cargo to its Massport Marine Terminal, located on the North Jetty, formerly a site for auto handling. Possible traffic includes salt and paper rolls. A warehouse could be constructed and rail extended into the site. Rail to the South Boston piers currently is cut because of the ‘Big Dig’ but will be replaced.

This rail, however, cannot serve the Conley container operation because of severe clearance problems. Massport plans a dedicated haul road and overweight travel [see 18 December 1998 issue] to reach the CSXT railhead for container traffic.

To ascertain whether all proposed uses for the Marine Terminal will function in the same space, Massport is now planning the site layout. {ARW discussion 2.Feb.99; Atlantic Northeast Rail and Marine Transport Review 1999 for the names of the shipping lines using the terminals}

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MASSPORT TRAFFIC 1998

Leone noted that despite the transition difficulties, port container tonnage increased for 1998. Exports decreased, but most ports are experiencing that because of the Asian decline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>% change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>import</td>
<td>604,107</td>
<td>773,359</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>export</td>
<td>338,541</td>
<td>304,107</td>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>79,013</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTR</td>
<td>4,167</td>
<td>4,677</td>
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<td>81,725</td>
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<td>56,022</td>
<td>64,271</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTR</td>
<td>14,288</td>
<td>9,720</td>
<td>-32.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>69,310</td>
<td>73,991</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Massport statistics)
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**SYDNEY**
27 January. **CARGO FELL SLIGHTLY LAST YEAR** after rebounding in 1997. Cargo totals for 1998 amounted to 599,317 metric tonnes, compared with 600,545 tonnes in 1997. These figures include cargo moving through facilities at the Sydney government wharf, Sydney Steel and the Cape Breton Development Corporation [see 8 January issue]. An increase in steel and break-bulk cargo, offset by a dramatic drop in coal and general-bulk cargo shipments, helped keep tonnages near 1997 levels.

Steel and break bulk increased to 150,944 tonnes in 1998, up from86,898 tonnes in 1997. The steel materials included rails and scrap metal.

Coal tonnages in 1997 were 50,750, while in 1998 the level of coal dropped and was combined with general cargo figures to produce a total of 92,839 tonnes. Don Rowe, Sydney harbourmaster, said only 30,000 tonnes of coal moved through the port in 1998.

The amount of fuel that came through the port in 1998, 355,534 tonnes, was the highest level since 1994, when fuels topped 384,000 tonnes.

Since 1991, the best year for cargo through the port was 1992, when the port handled 2,535,597 tonnes. That year, coal cargo levels were 2,125,578 tonnes. {Halifax Herald 27 Jan.99}
HALIFAX

January. **TWO LINES ANNOUNCED NEW SERVICE TO HALIFAX.**

Melfi Marine
This line announced a larger vessel into its service between Halifax and the Caribbean. The *Melfi Toronto* has a capacity of 580 containers (TEUs, or 20-foot equivalent units), about 150 more than its predecessor. Melfi, which has headquarters in Havana and its Canadian head office in Toronto, has called Halifax since 1992. Its first vessel carried only 130 containers. *Melfi Toronto* carries general cargo as well as containers. Included in its regular general cargo are nickel sulfides from Cuba. The material is offloaded in Halifax and sent by rail to Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, for refining.

The ship will load exports, including fish products, for the return trip to Cuba.

Coral Container lines
Coral Container Lines will call Canada on a 15-day frequency, offering import and export service between Halifax and Havana, with connecting service to other Caribbean and South American ports of call, for breakbulk and containerized cargoes. Its M/V *Mariel* can handle 274 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units).

Use of Richmond Terminals
In 1998, Halifax Port Corporation invested approximately $5 million to reconstruct the wharf face and brow at Pier 9A, Richmond Terminals, a multi-use facility designed specifically for the handling of the combined cargo operation of carriers like Coral Container Lines. Richmond Terminals, located just south of the domestic intermodal terminal, is equipped with on-dock rail to facilitate direct loading to ship, truck, rail, or storage. {Halifax Herald 25&26.Jan.99}

3 February. **NOVA SCOTIA OFFICIALS ARE VISITING MASSPORT AND QUONSET POINT** this week, to investigate the possibility of feeder service to the two ports, should Sea-Land and Maersk use Halifax for a container mega-facility.

The Halifax Port Group is considering a second round of contacts with railroads, ports, and government officials in New England to gather information on how the transport facilities can form a partnership to move containers between Halifax and the tri-state area.

Ongoing discussions with ocean carriers
Bill Adams, spokesperson for the Port Group, said information gathered by the Group is passed on to Sea-Land/Maersk to help the selection process [see 22 January issue]. For example, as the Group discovers shorter rail transit times to the tri-state region, it reports that. {ARW discussions 2-3.Feb.99}

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Taddeo, president of the Port Corporation, said: “We continue to increase our market share in the northeastern United States because of the productivity increases of the SLH. Coté has turned things around. He works closely with the Port of Montréal to improve our service.” {Oliver Bertin in Toronto Globe and Mail 11.Jan.99}

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REORGANIZATION OF PORTLAND’S FACILITIES appears in the cards, following the January decision by Bath Iron Works to turn over its drydock area to the city. The city will probably consolidate passenger facilities to the drydock area, and expand the container facility into the former passenger area. [See  8 October 1998 issue.] {John Richardson in Portland Press Herald 5.Jan.99}
## EXCURSION RAIL STATISTICS

### New England Headquartered Tourist / Excursion Railroad Operation

**January - December 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RR Alpha</th>
<th>RR Name</th>
<th>Passenger Count</th>
<th>Passenger Miles</th>
<th>Passenger Train Miles</th>
<th>Passenger per Train</th>
<th>Average Trip length</th>
<th>Estimated Trips</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALE</td>
<td>Valley Railroad Company</td>
<td>132,146</td>
<td>1,512,979</td>
<td>2,303</td>
<td>657/day</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>201 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSRX</td>
<td>Conway Scenic Railroad</td>
<td>106,823</td>
<td>2,283,178</td>
<td>19,080</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>893</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLL</td>
<td>Plymouth &amp; Lincoln</td>
<td>58,726</td>
<td>1,398,284</td>
<td>14,534</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>610</td>
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<td>CCRX</td>
<td>Cape Cod Railroad</td>
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<td>GMRC</td>
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<td>VTR</td>
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<td>11,448</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>359</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML</td>
<td>Belfast &amp; Moosehead Lake</td>
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<td>273,749</td>
<td>2,995</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>MC</td>
<td>Maine Coast Railroad</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>PW</td>
<td>Providence And Worcester</td>
<td>2,462</td>
<td>646,220</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>651</td>
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<td>BAR</td>
<td>Bangor And Aroostook</td>
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Source: FRA Office of Safety, calculations

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