

Speaking Notes

Moncton, March 29, 2010

**MARC LALIBERTÉ, PRESIDENT AND CEO, VIA RAIL CANADA
DELIVERED AT INDUSTRIAL RAIL SERVICES, INC., MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, STATION
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Minister Ashfield,

Mr. Henderson,

Mr. Carpenter,

Distinguished guests,

Good morning!

What a pleasure it is to be here in Moncton to participate in the awarding of this contract that has benefits for so many Canadians.

First, let me say that this project – and numerous other improvements across Canada – are thanks to an unprecedented \$923 million capital investment in passenger rail by this Government of Canada. This investment is sincerely appreciated by all of us at VIA and the more than four million travelers who choose VIA annually.

Much of the work already being done right here, at Industrial Rail Services will directly benefit Canada's Atlantic region. The Renaissance cars that you see here today are undergoing important modifications that will improve their accessibility and performance for all our passengers – including those with disabilities – on board the Ocean, between Halifax, Moncton and Montreal. That project is worth close to six million dollars!

Also under way at IRSI right now is the complete overhaul of our Light, Rapid and Comfortable, or LRC, fleet. The work done as part of this almost hundred million dollars contract will fully renew all 98 of VIA's Canadian-built cars, the mainstay of our Quebec-Ontario intercity services. The program will not only renew them for up to 20 additional years of fast, comfortable and reliable service, but also reduce their energy requirements

by up to 20 per cent, making them more cost-effective and reducing their already-low environmental footprint.

These projects have already created over a hundred jobs, right here at Industrial Rail Services – and they tell me they are still hiring!

As I was travelling here for this event, I reflected on its significance and one word kept coming to mind: unique. In every respect, this is a unique project.

First, there is the equipment itself. The RDC always has been a unique piece of rolling stock. It revolutionized the passenger rail industry when it was unveiled in 1949. Many companies had tried to create a self-propelled passenger car powered by internal combustion, but none succeeded until the legendary Budd Company developed the RDC. Here was a self-contained passenger car that was fast, sturdy, reliable, cost-effective and up to the challenges presented by everything from fast and frequent commuter operation to service into the remote regions of North America. And the RDC looked good, too. The “vest-pocket streamliner” is what the trade industry reporters called it.

The RDC revolutionized Canadian passenger railroading. It improved service on a diverse series of routes from Atlantic to Pacific when it was introduced in the 1950s by Canadian Pacific and Canadian National. More than one-quarter of all the RDCs produced ultimately went to work in Canada.

Today – 61 years after it was first unveiled – the RDC continues to play a unique role within VIA’s portfolio of coast-to-coast services. It remains the ideal piece of passenger rail rolling stock for the two routes to which we assign it. Both of these routes are unique.

Between Sudbury and White River, Ontario, VIA’s RDCs provide a reliable and efficient lifeline. They deliver a vital service to an area devoid of highways and air services. Our RDC train is the only game in town – year-round.

On Vancouver Island, our RDCs provide daily service between Victoria, Nanaimo and Courtenay – just as they have been doing for more than 50 years. The ongoing popularity of this RDC-equipped route is a vibrant tribute to the validity of passenger rail service.

But unique, too, is the combination that will result from the contract we are signing today. It links these RDC services with the skilled workforce here at IRSI. That's a winning combination.

The relationship that has been built between VIA and IRSI over the past decade is impressive. Through the work you have done on a wide variety of equipment rebuilding contracts with VIA, the people of IRSI have demonstrated capabilities that are the pride of Atlantic Canada. Your work in rebuilding and improving our fleet pays dividends daily to the Canadians who choose VIA for their travel requirements across Canada.

It is really appropriate that today's announcement is happening in Moncton. Located in the heart of the Maritimes, Moncton has a proud history and connection to the Canadian railway industry. While the role and economic base of Moncton and the Maritimes have evolved a lot since the first trains came through, some things stay the same.

People from Moncton have every right to be justly proud, as do all New Brunswickers and Maritimers, of their perseverance, entrepreneurial spirit, honest hard work and, above all, a can-do attitude second to none.

So, it is with great pride that I am here today on behalf of the 3,100 employees of VIA Rail Canada. The awarding of this contract, worth \$12.6M, for the rebuilding of our RDC fleet is yet another tribute to the unique skills and expertise the people of IRSI bring to every project. Like the RDCs and the services they provide, you are unique. And you are helping all of us at VIA prove that the road to the future is paved with steel rails.

Thank you!