

The Mayor of Bouloc who wishes to inform us of his point of view with regard to "the Quarry" and who took notice of the importance of our website in the daily life of Bouloc has asked Bouloc Environnement to open our pages as to express him selve.

The Association, open for discussion and eager to contribute to a fast outcomefor a matter which has already lasted too long, accepted this demand.

Herebelow, the complete text proposed by our Mayor on this subject, followed by the comments of Mr Daniel Bonnemaïson, secretary of Bouloc-Environment, on behave of the Association.

The quarry¹ ...

... Written with a majuscule, it means “the profession of diplomat”, and diplomacy is needed to cope with the things people, frightened by this project of the quarry, say and do. There it only concerns the exploitation of mineral matter.

Why such a project ?

Bouloc did not ask for the installation of a quarry where limestone will be extracted. But for our comfort there is a growing need for broken up stone: for roads, houses, swimming pools and other constructions.....

Free enterprise made that a producer wanted to diversify his assortment of limestone products. We all know that Bouloc is situated on a plateau of limestone. In February 2007, Mr. Rup, proprietor of the gravel industry Rup SA has, with help of the Bureau de Recherche Géologique et Minière (BRGM), informed me of his wish to carry out test borings on the plots most suitable for the project he had in mind.

In July, after the harvest had been taken in, with the permission of the owner, tests have been carried out on the parcels where the future quarry might be located. These tests ended during the month of August.

There, in answer to questions of promenaders, I have used the word “quarry” and « donner carrière à quelqu’un » means “giving someone the opportunity to manifest himself”. Immediately an association has been founded whose purpose was to protect the environment. Such a coming together of people in favour of this is very stylish and rewarding. A commendable association.

On my request, Mr. Rup came on Monday the 2nd of October at 11.00 to the town hall in order to present his project to certain members of the council together with the majors gathered in the “Communauté de communes”. The same evening Mr. Rup has come back to present his project concisely now to the plenary council of Bouloc (a completeness which hardly ever happened during its mandate). A commendable intervention.

As of today only the administrative procedure is of interest for us.

In it two important landmarks are noteworthy:

1. A study will be made of the impact the project has (“étude d’impact”), this study will be paid by Mr. Rup and is demanded by the Ministry of the Environment, which will decide whether or not the project can be continued.
2. This is followed by a public inquiry (“enquête publique”) which is decided by the Préfecture. This will be supervised by a steward who is responsible for the inquiry, and who will be appointed by the prefect.

At the town hall during a month a register will be available for the citizens of Bouloc in which, after stating their name, they can express their opinion(s) about the project.

After a synthesis of the remarks, the prefect will give his decision about the feasibility of the project.

Up to now, no official authority has asked for the advice of the commune or the council.

The votes and the other missives sent to the prefecture or Mr. Rup can only be considered to be thoughts and ideas, and not decisions.

The signs (banners, placards) which are so ugly in our beautiful landscape, are our fun for those who place them and those who do away with them.

And the free interventions on the Net and in public are nothing but prophecies.

Roland Gervais

¹ Twice in this text a pun is made about the quarry, next to its meaning of “quarry” the word « carrière » also means the diplomatic service. Later it is used in the expression “donner carrière à quelqu’un” which means “giving someone the opportunity to manifest himself”.

Some further remarks concerning the « Chanson de Roland »

In his text entitled « La Carrière ... », the Mayor gives explanations which are incomplete, sometimes inaccurate and often biased.

Certainly, the Mayor of Bouloc did not ask for the opening of a quarry. But neither did he do anything to defend his village against predators.

He explains that there is a growing need of broken rock for our comfort. However, he forgets that we already have, nearby, our quarry OSAGRA, which, at the present pace of exploitation, disposes of a lime reserve of at least a century. Furthermore, this quarry is up to the demand of all the plans known to us at this moment. This leads to the question what the fate of OSAGRA will be, the loss of labour that will be provoked by the opening of a new quarry.

The Mayor also mentions « free competition » in order to justify the plans of an industrialist to install himself in the face of the competitor, that he wishes to destroy according to a procedure well known in this branch of industry of which he already gained nearly total control in this region: being in a dominating position makes it so much easier to raise his prices !

- But how about the interests of people living in Bouloc and the villages around it in all this, Mister Mayor ?
- When will you finally start to think about general interest and not about that of one person, however mighty he may be.
- When will you finally start to say the truth, that a quarry does not bring in money to a community and that it destroys more labour places in the vicinity than it creates ?
- What are you going to say to the families that will have to leave ?
- What about the schools of Bouloc and Belveze that might have to close their doors for want of pupils ?
- When are you finally going to admit that a quarry at Bouloc is not only a ecological nuisance, but also an economical disaster ?

Rewriting history in his way, the Mayor has forgotten that it is his explanation about the “plum trees” and not the word “quarry”, by the way, a word which, around that time got banished from his vocabulary (do you remember “the pretended quarries”), which ignited the powder. Being sick and tired of being treated as imbeciles, some inhabitants of Bouloc and its vicinity founded an association in order to finely gather viable information, to bring that out in the open, to fight against the quarry because it is a bad project and to propose better solutions to the council.

It is true, however, as the Mayor brings to memory, that on the 2nd of October, Mr. Rup did come to the town hall twice to explain his project. But the Mayor forgets to mention that after those explanations given by Mr. Rup, the council rejected the project in a secret vote without appeal

He also forgets to mention that 85% of the population of Bouloc signed a petition “against” the quarry. Neither does he mention the 1500 signatures “against” the quarry that have been “gathered” by the Association among the people living next to “the hole” as it is foreseen. Nor does he remember that a letter, signed by the total council, has been send by him registered and with answer, to the one who brought in the project, asking him to abandon it.

The Mayor mentions in his text the administrative stage, as if this part is inevitable. Does he know more than we do ?

As far as we are concerned, we do not believe in it. It would mean that the industrialist decided to continue a project despite the written request of the Mayor and the council to abandon it. In practice this hardly ever happens, seeing the power of authority and the respectability of a Mayor, the highest magistrate of his community. An industrialist hardly ever confronts a Mayor in such a case, he has more to lose than to win !

However, might an administrative procedure nevertheless take place, an investigating commissioner, appointed by the president of Administrative Tribunal (and not by the Prefect as the Mayor says) would come to Bouloc and the surrounding villages in order to organise a public inquiry.

We have to point out that, at the occasion of an inquiry, might it indeed take place, it will be of the utmost importance that the whole population gives his opinion without any reserve. All standpoints are important and it is of the highest interest to express them in order to avoid that others have to decide for us in our place ! Remember that the investigating commissioner is neutral and independent. He is there to listen and to make his report to the Prefect. He is not an enemy and his power is considerable.

The Mayor claims that we are only concerned with the administrative procedure, and in that he makes a mistake, and misleads us: it is important that the public powers are aware of the message of rejection of the inhabitants of Bouloc as well as of the intolerance of the extremist who takes the signs away. We do not know whether it gives pleasure to the one taking away the signs, but putting them back is not as pleasurable as the Mayor supposes.

It is true that « these signs disfigure our beautiful countryside” as is expressed by the Mayor, finely conscious of the beauty of Bouloc. Fortunately, this necessary ugliness will be less definitive and permanent than the quarry it fights. By the way, as soon as the intruder announces the withdrawal of his project, the signs and banners will be taken away and together we will have a big celebration ! Let us bet that no “hairy types with iron bars” will be trying to place signs after the battle ! But let us keep far from “vaticinations”² !

² A forecast made in a state of delirium. A word not much used nowadays but which the Mayor will certainly manage to get back in fashion.