



3,000 welcome GO to Hill

By SHARON HAY
Liberal Staff Writer

Saturday was a glorious day. The sun shone obligingly on inauguration celebrations for the new Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority rail service to Richmond Hill.

Ceremonies began at Union Station where 300 Torontonians were present to see Premier of Ontario, William Davis, and Ontario Minister of Transportation and Communications, James Snow make the first cut in demolition work within Union Station to get the giant reconstruction program rolling, and cut the ribbon to open the new GO rail service to Richmond Hill.

Following the ceremony the official party and any of the public who wished to join the excursion boarded the shiny new Bi-level GO train for the trip to Richmond Hill.

Passengers enjoyed a ride along the forgotten Don River, waving to crowds of picture takers on the way, making stops for ceremonies at Oriole Station and the old Cummer Station.

At Langstaff GO station, on old Highway 7, east of Yonge, Anthony Roman, Mayor of the Town of Markham told Mr. Davis and Mr. Snow how area residents had waited a long time for this service.

Mr. Davis replied by inviting those present to board the train and come to Richmond Hill for the Inauguration festivities.

The entourage arrived to see an estimated 3,000 people at the Newkirk station in Richmond Hill.

As Mr. Davis descended the train steps he was first welcomed by Mayor David Schiller and immediately received the "Friend of

Progress" award from Bob Higgs, Governor of Zone 7 for the Canadian Progress Club.

Mr. Higgs said he wanted to thank Mr. Davis for the opportunity given to the club, York Central group, to sell refreshments and raise monies for charities.

After officially cutting the ribbon to launch the Richmond Hill GO commuter train service, Mr. Davis and his party proceeded to the stage set up in the new parking lot.

Mayor Schiller, members of Richmond Hill council and Regional Chairman, Garfield Wright welcomed Mr. Davis and his party and acknowledged guests such as Margaret Britnell, George Timpson, Bob Forhan, Garnet Williams and Gordon Ratcliff.

After reading a telegram from Barney Danson extending his

best wishes for a successful opening, the Mayor talked about the new service describing it as a convenient, rapid, not-too-expensive service to Toronto, representing a solution to the energy conservation problem.

In his address commending Mr. Davis, MTC Minister Snow said, "It's great what we can do with money — when you make it available to us, Mr. Premier."

The Premier hoped residents would use the service to relieve congestion on arterial roads.

"It's a great way to ride downtown," he said.

The Bi-level would be included in the Richmond Hill service when ridership warrants it, said Mr. Davis, but his home riding of Brampton was competing for the train, too.

In an interview before the ceremony,

Richmond Hill Councillor Andre Chateauvert, said he had his doubts about the new service.

He was worried about the fact that the new rail service might cut down on the need for town buses on Yonge Street.

"We'll be struck with two white elephants," said Mr. Chateauvert.

When questioned about this problem Councillor and Engineering Committee Chairman, Mike Burnie said he thought the rail and bus service could, in his opinion, only complement each other.

He stressed the need to get the individual car off the highway for energy conservation and saw trains and buses as a way to move people more conveniently than the private car.

After the inauguration ceremony people rushed to

line up for their particular choice of free excursion ride to Union Station and back.

Waiting on the siding was Canadian

National Railways' last operable steam locomotive, Bullet Nosed Betty and GO's brand new double decker, the Bi-level.

GO will serve us well - Stong

Richmond Hill has been described as a "bedroom community" to Toronto many times and with the arrival of the new GO rail commuter service some feel this direction will be emphasized.

At the opening ceremonies at Union Station, Member of Parliament for York Centre, Alf Stong said that this issue is always a real worry, but he feels the GO service will serve the area well.

"I think it is incumbent on local authorities to get in-

dustries to Richmond Hill," said Mr. Stong.

When Premier of Ontario, William Davis was questioned on this point, he said he felt the new rail service was a great asset to the community.

Any community might have a lot of local growth, but some still wish to travel to Toronto, pointed out Mr. Davis.

It is a great alternative to crowded roads, said Mr. Davis.

He hoped residents would use the service so it could be expanded in the future.

800 people enjoy nostalgic adventure

About 800 people rode "Bullet Nosed Betty", Canadian National Railways' last operable steam locomotive, to Union Station after the inauguration ceremonies in Richmond Hill Saturday.

Some chose this train out of curiosity and some for purely nostalgic reasons.

The sight, sounds and smells of the train were just as some remembered, but youngsters were most impressed by the chug-a-chug sounds, the warning whistle and the speed of nearly 100 kilometres per hour.

On the southbound

trip from Richmond Hill to Union Station those who wished to disembark at the new Langstaff station "were treated to a bonus" said Bruce Kearney, master mechanic for CNR.

Because of steam problems the train could not stop at the station.

Those who rode the GO Bi-level found comfort to be the overriding theme. Bright orange, blue and cream interiors, carpeting throughout, atmospheric controls and roominess impressed the approximately 1,800 people who toured south.

The panoramic view from the top level made residents eager for the day when the Bi-level would be installed on the Richmond Hill line. At this time it is used on the Lakeshore service.

Northbound steam riders were about 45 minutes late returning, causing some of those waiting to be anxious.

There was some problem at the Oriole station to let the southbound Bi-level pass, said Bruce Kearney, but the main problem was a broken hose bag to the engine which had to be repaired at Union Station before the return trip.



It was a happy day for most of the politicians Saturday, although York-North MPP Bill Hodgson, left, seems to have something else on his mind. Premier Bill Davis and Richmond Hill Mayor Dave Schiller participate in the opening ceremonies at the GO Train inaugural, while in the back row, left to right, looking on are Markham Mayor Tony Roman; Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Gordon Ratcliff; King Mayor Margaret Britnell; Vaughan Councillor Terry Goodwin; and Region of York Chairman Garfield Wright.

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Weather prevents him from reaching pole

Minus 41 degree temperatures, blizzard conditions, rough ice and poor visibility prevented Richmond Hill resident Alex Campbell from planting the Richmond Hill flag on the true north pole.

Mr. Campbell and 34 other members of the Engineers' Club of Toronto left April 13 for a seven-day tour of oil and gas installations, mines,

military bases and research centres in the high Arctic.

The high point in the tour was to be a landing at the pole, complete with

flag raising ceremony and the claiming of the pole for Canada.

A Japanese overland group, also trying to reach the pole, were stranded for 36 hours, and

as far as Mr. Campbell knows, they have not made it yet.

It was a tremendous learning experience, said Mr. Campbell.

"We gained a real

appreciation of the north."

Mr. Campbell said the engineers' "eyes popped out" at the dollars spent for operating costs in the

high Arctic.

"After 41 below conditions, it's good to be home," said Mr. Campbell.

Block Parents seeking sale items

It's time for spring cleaning.

Anything that is still usable but unwanted, can be donated to the second annual Block Parent Garage Sale, to be held at Don Little Truck Centre at Benson Avenue and Yonge Street, May 13.

Publicity Chairman Olga Telizyn, said they would like everything, except clothes, for the sale.

Heavy items will be picked up by calling Mrs. Telizyn at 881-5608.

Block Parent members have arranged for drop

off depots for donated items in four areas of Richmond Hill.

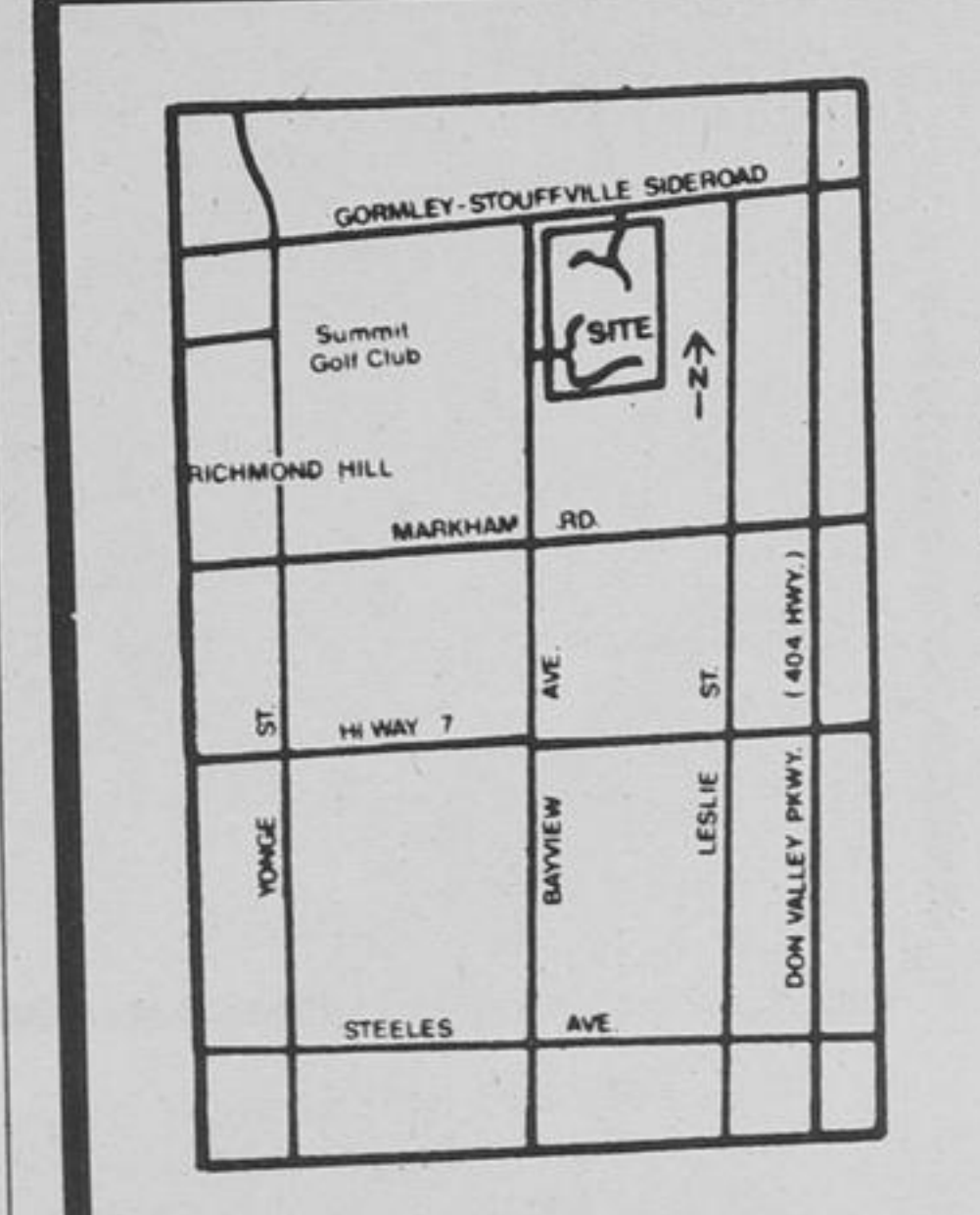
In Oak Ridges contact Pat Smith, 89 Douglas Road, 773-5754; in the old town of Richmond Hill goods can be dropped at the corner store next to Kresge's in the Richmond Heights Shopping Plaza;

in the Hillcrest Mall area contact Barb White, 298 Kitsilano Crescent, 884-4662; and in Richvale, Janet Parissi, 5 Claridge Drive, 889-9896.

The sale will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, and if it rains, Sunday from 12 to 4 p.m.

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