

Plessisville

Richmond Hill students visit Quebec town

A group of 39 students, 36 from Richmond Hill High School and three from Langstaff Secondary School, set out just after dawn Thursday, April 5, on a foray into Quebec.

Their destination was a small town Plessisville, situated south of the St. Lawrence about two and one-half hours drive by bus from Montreal and a little over an hour from Quebec City.

It is a 10-hour trip by bus and train from Richmond Hill.

The students set off, taking with them (thanks to the good will of Mayor David Schiller) a flag of Richmond Hill, which happily bears a motto in

French 'En la rose je fleuris'.

This was a precaution in the event that they might be met by hostile forces in La Belle province.

A most unnecessary precaution; for what they were met with was the warmest possible welcome from the students of Plessisville Polyvalente (High School), the parents of the students, the Mayor and the people of the town of Plessisville; a town which meets our claim to

being the Rose Capital of Canada with its claim of being the Maple Syrup Capital of the same country.

In physical size Plessisville appears to be about as big (or small) as Richmond Hill proper. It has a population of about 12,000 and is 'small town' only in its size and relative distance from any big city.

Apart from the production of Maple Syrup in the vicinity, its largest industry is Forano, an engineering

firm that specializes in the making of custom-built forest felling equipment.

BIG FACTORY
A highlight of the trip was a visit to Forano's very impressive factory. The machines they produce are huge, but are dwarfed by the equipment used in the manufacturing.

More than 1,000 people are employed there, and there are branches throughout Canada.

The third largest industry in Plessisville is

the Forano High School. Housing 1,800 students and 140 teachers, it is an even more impressive building than the Forano factory.

The town arena is part of the school building and the school caters to the needs of an astonishing number and variety of students including the trainable retarded and students bound for careers in many fields.

The Ontario students were astonished by two other aspects of school life in Plessisville.

Smoking by students is permitted in the corridors of the school, and although forbidden, is a common practise in many classrooms.

The other surprise was that students in Plessisville address their teachers on a first name basis.

The Ontario students were surprised to observe that in spite of what by Ontario standards appears to be laxity, discipline in the school was very good, very good indeed.

The principal and teachers must, of course, be given the credit for this, but it was evident to the guests that the people of Plessisville are nice people.

CORDIAL WELCOME

The Ontario students were given a most cordial welcome into their homes.

Language was a barrier that crumbled more than a little before the assault of hospitality.

While the guests enjoyed and appreciated a

visit to a cabane a sucre and the dance in their honor at the school's discotheque, the hospitality of the hosts and their parents was evidently what impressed them the most.

At the soiree d'adieu (farewell evening) Ontario students were presented with mementos, plaques of Plessisville and in return, Richmond Hill.

Speeches of thanks and appreciation were exchanged.

It was clear that the touch-stone of success of this the first part of an exchange of visits, was not just the generosity and friendliness of the French Canadian hosts. It was also the responsible behaviour of the Ontario guests.

Students from the Plessisville Polyvalente will be visiting Richmond Hill and Langstaff on the first weekend in May.

Plans are well underway to make them feel as welcome here as they made their guests feel.

St. Roberts students at Waterloo University

Students and teachers from St. Robert's Catholic High School in Markham will be among several high school students who will visit the University of Waterloo Monday.

The students will spend the day learning about computers. They will attend lectures during the morning and in the afternoon will use one of the multi-million dollar computers on the UW campus to find their own solutions to problems.

Those with sufficient knowledge may spend the entire day working with computers. Consultants will be available to assist them.

Students with no previous computer science experience will receive lectures on problem solving and actual use of the computer using a FORTRAN-like language called TUTOR.

Instruction in FORTRAN and APL languages will be available to those students having some computer background.

UW has been offering these "computer science days" to high school students for more than 14 years. Last year, 9,000 students from 210 high schools in Ontario visited the UW campus. UW feels it is important to inform young people about computers since increasingly, society is looking to the computing profession to solve its information-processing problems.

Stong still attempting to stop hydro lines through Hill

York-Centre M.L.A., Alf Stong has another idea to thwart Ontario Hydro's high voltage transmission line through Thornhill and Richmond Hill.

The Parkway Belt Task Force, who are responsible for planning the hydro corridor through the Parkway Belt, have not yet held an impact hearing for the area east of Highway 48.

Mr. Stong said he will ask Energy Minister James Auld for an Environment Assessment Hearing study on this area east of Highway 48 which includes Box Grove in Markham.

His reasoning for this request of the minister is that he feels Ontario Hydro "cannot act in a vacuum".

Mr. Stong said he feels the conclusions of such a hearing would have an effect on the whole line.

Last week Mr. Stong was advised the town of Richmond Hill had been refused such an environmental hearing by the Minister, because Parkway Belt hearings had been held in this area.

A petition will be requested from the council of Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill to support his request, said Mr. Stong.



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