



The most common questions in letters written to us when we first arrived in Alberta, were ones regarding homesteading or pioneering, and loneliness.

Now that we've been here a year and a half, it's about time I answered.

To begin with, we're far from being homesteaders. Although there's much work to do on the farms here, most was done by the REAL pioneers.

From conversations I've learned that when the first people arrived in this area in the 1930's, there was nothing but forest. Most of the men worked in lumber camps and homesteaded—that is, built a house, cleared and seeded 40 acres on a quarter section (160 acres.)

One old man I spoke to said the clearing was done by cutting down the trees, then pulling the stumps with horses (or cows) and a "puller" made from old car parts. (I forget which parts.)

The families lived almost entirely off the land, as it was too long a trip to stores, doctors, or the post office.

Many areas have books published with pictures and first-hand accounts of the homesteaders who settled there. One book from a county east of Red Deer lists Harry Laycock, George Leonard Laycock and family, and their neighbour Peter Stewart as homesteaders.

They moved from their farms five miles south of Guelph in 1901, as they decided they would "rather clear willow brush and poplar than pick stones on the Ontario farm."

Mrs. Laycock's "enthusiasm was at low ebb, coming from a tenroom brick house in Ontario to this small lumber shack. No wonder she was homesick; and no neighbours in sight."

The book goes on to say that in 1904 the house burned down, and everything brought from Ontario was lost.

There were people coming from many countries to work in the lumber camps and claim homestead land. A person has only to pick up the local paper and read the names of the people on hockey teams or curling rinks or whatever—Twerdochilbs, Uchysyn, Shokal, Swenseid, Sjerdal, Pye, Maisonneuve, Baragar, Schmidt, Saboe, Fitzhugh, etc.—to realize the great variety of nationalities that are represented.

First names? Bondon, Milton, Hilarius, Nyla, Myron, Eino. Of course there's all the usual names too, and probably many Smiths, but so far I haven't come across any.

Getting back to Buck Creek—somewhere between the 40's and 1955, there were two or three great fires that swept thousands of acres, levelling much of the forest that the lumber camps hadn't touched.

But even 20 years ago, there were enough trees to make the 15 mile drive east to Breton, an ordeal. The neighbours talk of the two-day trip, (one day there and one back,) of getting the wagon stuck in "gumbo" and having to unhitch it, take it apart, and carry it to high ground to put it back together.

Someone else spoke of giant trees arching across the road to make a tunnel, of bouncing and jolting over roots sticking out of the ground.

Then oil was discovered. As fast as they could, oil companies put in roads (one mile apart going north and south, two miles apart going east and west) and began drilling. The country is dotted with wells, usually one per quarter-section. Some roads only go as far as oil wells, but the odd one does go right through to join up with another. All these roads have no names, so there is some difficulty in describing where you've been or finding where you're going.

A farm auction announcement in the local paper might read something like the one I saw in Saskatchewan: "Farm Auction of power farm equipment belonging to Joe T. Ball at the farm located 1 Mile

South, 1/2 Mile East, 2 Miles South, 1 Mile East, 1/2 Mile South, and 1/2 Mile East of Holdfast; or 7 Miles West of Dilke, 4 Miles North, 1 Mile East, 1/2 Mile South, 1/2 Mile East, Sec. 35, Twp. 22, Rge. 25."

See how much simpler the lines and sideroads of Esquering are? And I hear that someone wants to start changing to names. Too bad.

Anyhow, once the roads were in and land became more accessible, (and the oil company often put hydro through too,) more homesteaders followed. I'm not too sure of all the details of homestead deals, but although homestead land is all taken up around here, many neighbours are still clearing and working their land to get title under the homestead act.

The clearing isn't still done using old car parts, of course. The trees are shallow-rooted enough that in a matter of hours, a bulldozer can push them over and pile them in rows to dry. It seems strange to pass a dense bush in the morning and return past an open field at night. Then a grand-daddy rototiller is brought in to work it all up for planting.

The following year, the dry rows of brush are burnt and pushed into piles which are burnt every year. The remainder is plowed under, I guess.

Where we are, in the west end of Leduc County, only about 25 per cent of the land is cleared. It's mostly flat, with poplar, spruce, and a few types of pine. Further west you get into the Forest Reserve.

Last November I was in a bank in Drayton Valley, staring out the window. It was a strange feeling to be in that ultra-modern building in a new plaza, looking at the distant mountains silhouetted black against a fantastic orange sunset. And probably in the 100 miles between them and me, there were no more than a dozen farms.

It's this combination of modern living in a "raw" country that is so appealing. We'll be clearing another 10 acres this year when the local "dozer makes its rounds; and the bush at present holds moose, deer, elk, as well as coyote and rabbits; not to mention the wolverine down Buck Creek. And last fall Gord climbed up on a knoll to look around and a bear came flying out from under his feet.

But—how can we call that "roughing it" or "pioneering" or whatever, when I have a dishwasher in the house?

Official Plan

A proposed official plan for Milton passed its first test during a public meeting at Brookville last week.

About 30 people attended the hall meeting.

It was the first of five public meetings, the last chance for citizens to make changes in the plan.

After the meetings the plan goes to Halton Region then Queen's Park for approval. Key parts of the plan are aimed at controlling residential development.

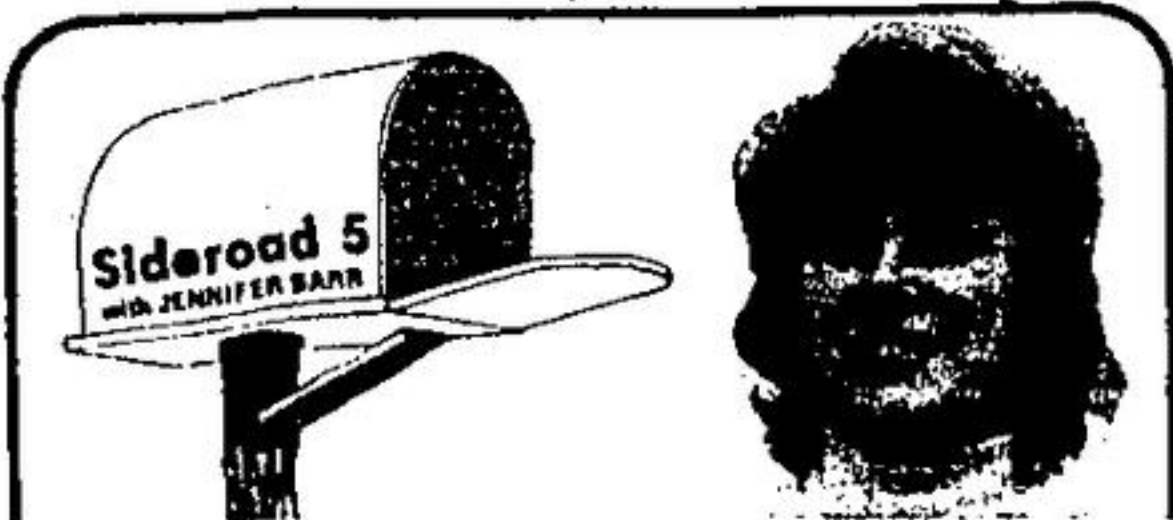
Major severances will be limited to a retiring "bonafide" farmer and to rural estate developments of 15 homes or less.

To attend conference

Hydro commission chairman Will McEachern, vice-chairman Bob MacArthur and superintendent Doug Mason will be attending the AMEU summer conference in Ottawa soon.



GORD THOMSON treads carefully this time, as he walks over top of a well-hidden bear den. Last time a black bear flew out the opening. It was hard to say who was more startled, Gord or the bear!



Does anyone know what happened to spring? I blinked twice and it was summer.

Every year I look forward to spring like a bride to her wedding. All the spring songs and poems were written for me. Then along comes the mild weather and all hell breaks loose.

There's fencing and harrowing and planting and construction and spring cleaning and organizing the marriage of the animals and birthing their young and feeding all the new mouths and...

And we don't even have a farm! I often feel like Betty Macdonald in the "Egg and I". Have you ever read her chapter on spring?

The only consolation is that all my acquaintances of similar life style are going through exactly the same thing.

Babies in the woods

For some strange reason this year we find ourselves with a new puppy, a lamb, a calf, baby bunnies, and about five million little chicks. It seemed like a good idea in February.

All of these youngsters require food at two hourly intervals - different schedules, of course. The larger animals want to be out on grass, preferably the neighbours? Visitors come to see all the cuties cooing how they'd love to live in the country, too.

Right about now I might consider a trade for a subdivision house set on a minute lot and one cat.

Holy cow!

Mind you, it's certainly a healthy life. I get lots of fresh air and exercise every time the cows get out. The medical fraternity endorse the desirability of daily runs and our cattle make sure they help.

I'd forgotten how devious and tenacious cows can be when it comes to getting through fences. Paddocks that have confined horses for years become open ranges to a couple of plump heifers.

A cow will bull her way through six foot coils of barbed wire to reach a lone thistle on the other side of the fence - regardless of the knee deep clover she's left.

A large awkward beast of a thousand pounds can limbo under a cedar rail nine inches from the ground. Electric fence just seems to add a little spice to the fun. What happened to Robert Louis Stevenson's gentle cow lying contentedly in the shade making milk?

So if you happen to see a couple of cows heading north on Highway 25 please don't try to stop them. With any luck they'll make it to Collingwood and solve all my problems.

Building permit issued

A building permit for \$150,000 was issued last month, for a new factory warehouse in Acton. Five other permits issued brought the total up to \$181,800.

Two permits were issued for residential alterations, additions and repairs for a total of \$2300. One permit was given for a new single family dwelling valued at \$23,000, one new residential garage valued at \$2000 and one commercial permit for the installation of two underground tanks at the BP station valued at \$4500.

The Halton Lung Association is conducting a five day smoking withdrawal clinic Monday May 30 to Friday, June 3, each evening 7.30 to 9.30 in the library of the school. Everyone is welcome.

Candidates meeting brings out NDP, Libs.

The fight to save precious farmland, and to stop gravel pits and hydro corridors appear to be the major issues in the upcoming provincial election in the Wellington-Dufferin-Peel riding.

A Meet-the-Candidates meeting was held in Erin District high school last Thursday, which grade 12 and 13 students attended. A few members of the general public also attended.

NDP candidate Marion Chambers and Liberal candidate Dave Wright attended the meeting to give their parties, as well as their own views of many of the issues. Progressive Conservative candidate and incumbent Jack Johnson did not attend.

Mr. Wright charged that Premier William Davis (PC) is on an "ego trip", and costing the province \$20 million for an election which most people do not feel is necessary. He pointed out that in the last 15 months, the provincial government has passed 105 bills, proof that a minority government is working.

Regional government

The Liberal candidate

Clinic for smokers

If you want another chance to stop smoking before the nice weather sets in, come to Stewarttown Senior Public School in Halton Hills.

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expressed fears of regional government, if the Davis government is to be re-elected. Mr. Wright pointed out that taxes in the average house, where there is regional government have gone up 105 per cent since 1970. He pointed out where there is no regional government, taxes have only risen 41 per cent.

He stressed that Guelph is looking into regionalization, and in turn looking towards areas in the Wellington-Dufferin-Peel riding to incorporate.

Better education is a matter which concerns the Liberals, Mr. Wright said. He stated the farmers have to be looked after. Unemployment is also a major concern, the candidate said, and the party has a few ideas on how to handle the situation and get jobs for the unemployed.

Natural resources

New Democratic Party candidate Marion Chambers said the preservation of natural resources is one of her party's main issues in this election. She said there has been a great mismanagement of "human and natural resources."

Unemployment is also a concern of Mrs. Chambers. She explained that she felt the country was exporting too much raw materials to be processed somewhere else. The candidate emphasized the processing should be done here, thus creating more jobs.

High government spending also came under attack by Mrs. Chambers, who claimed the NDP government in Manitoba spent less than the Conservative government in Ontario, on a per capita basis. "We see that we have the money before we spend it," she stated.

A question and answer period followed the candidates' speeches.

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No answers

Site F was chosen over any other site as a Halton landfill site because it had the best chance of getting approved by other government bodies Halton Regional Chairman, Ric Morrow told members of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce at an "accountability" meeting Wednesday night.

He said the region's decision only reflected the engineers' reports and that the final result was based on six years of work and \$250,000 worth of research.

"There are no magic answers, they are all expensive and they all take time," he said.

"Would you rather have us throw away six years of work and a quarter-of-a-million dollars?" he wondered.

"Maybe we could all pack our garbage in our back yard for six years, while we look for another solution."

St. Joseph's "AT HOME" to Acton

Sunday, May 29
2-4 p.m.
in the Church Yard

Entertainment
by
THE CHORALIERS

Choose it
from Canada's largest rental fleet of GM cars and GMC trucks.

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ERAMOSA Pioneer Day

Are You Interested In Participating???

PLANNED ACTIVITIES...

Pioneer displays, crafts, games and food
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Tea Room at the Olde Town Hall

Parade 1:00 p.m. — Contact Carol Meadows 856-4664

Bed Race 3:00 p.m. — Contact Evelyn Easson 856-4434

Pioneer Beauty Contest 4:00 p.m. — Contact Mary Coulter 856-4624

Ball Tournament — All Day

Pioneer Dance 9:00 p.m. — Tennis Courts

PRIZES: for the best float, bed race champion, Pioneer beauty, best display, best costumes at dance!

Rockmosa Community Centre
Sat. July 2

FURTHER INFO CONTACT:

BARB 856-4854
MARLA 856-9819

DAVID 856-4717
JOHN 856-9965

IN HALTON-BURLINGTON

BILL JOHNSON N.D.P.

IT'S SENSELESS TO WASTE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

BUT IT'S CRIMINAL TO WASTE OUR HUMAN RESOURCES

Education - Financing
The N.D.P. will gradually remove the education component of municipal property taxes through the corporate sector.

Funds will be dispensed on the basis of community need and school service, rather than on the existing ceiling formula system.

Industrial Goals
The goals of a New Democratic government's industrial development strategy are full employment. A comprehensive plan will designate areas in Ontario where industrial development needs to be encouraged to allow all parts of the province to reach their economic and social potential. An N.D.P. government will work closely with local people so that regional planning will be consistent with the overall provincial plan.

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