

Editorial

A letter to Michael

Dear Mike:

Just thought I would drop you a line to let you know that your budget speech of last Tuesday certainly got a lot of coverage in the major Toronto newspapers. And I'm glad it did.

Well, I'm not really glad, but a friend of mine is and I was only to glad to help out - courtesy of your budget.

You see, this friend has a parrot and Wednesday morning he called me up to say he had a problem.

He didn't have any material to put on the bottom of the bird cage and the parrot (being a very fastidious and quirky bird) was refusing to do his business with no covering on the bottom of the cage.

The bird even refused to take a nibble or two of Ex-Lax and my friend was starting to really worry about his pet because his eyes were starting to cross. Believe me, Mike, that's a tough thing for a parrot to do.

Anyway, I had several of the Wednesday morning papers kicking around filled with stories on your budget speech, so I thought I had a solution to the poor bird's problem.

Off I trundled to my friend's place with the newspapers tucked under my arm hoping to get there before the bird exploded. There is nothing worse than cleaning up your place after a bird has exploded - at least, so I'm told.

My friend was waiting at the door and asked me to hurry.

Into his livingroom we went and there was this poor greenish-colored parrot groaning on his perch and in obvious agony. His eyes did look crossed.

"I thought your parrot was red in color?" I asked my friend.

"He was, until he got plugged-up," came the reply.

Quickly, we took to the task at hand and covered the bottom of the bird cage with newspapers filled with your budget speech

Editor's Notebook
by
Colin Gibson

stories.

Mike, your budget speech did wonders.

No sooner had we laid down the newspapers and taken cover behind the couch, when the bird started to make strange noises.

I peered over the edge of the couch and there was the parrot, looking down, appearing to read the stories about your budget speech.

Well, Mike, needless to say, your budget speech did wonders for the ailing bird. He did his business again, again and again on your speech.

After a little while, the greenish tinge was gone from the parrot's feathers, he began to take on his natural red color and his eyes became uncrossed.

I told my friend I was going to write you a letter and thank you for your help in saving the constipated bird. If you hadn't made your budget speech, the poor bird might now be in that great big bird cage in the sky.

By the way, Mike, the bird's name is Johnny Canuck.

P.S. - I was actually going to write a column about your budget, but knowing you are a caring person, felt you would like the bird story better.

P.P.S. - Did Brian get my last letter?

Say hello to all your feathered friends in Ottawa for me.

Regards, Colin.

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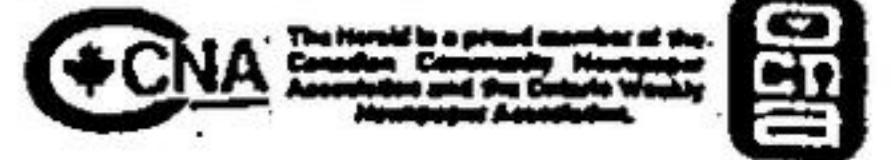
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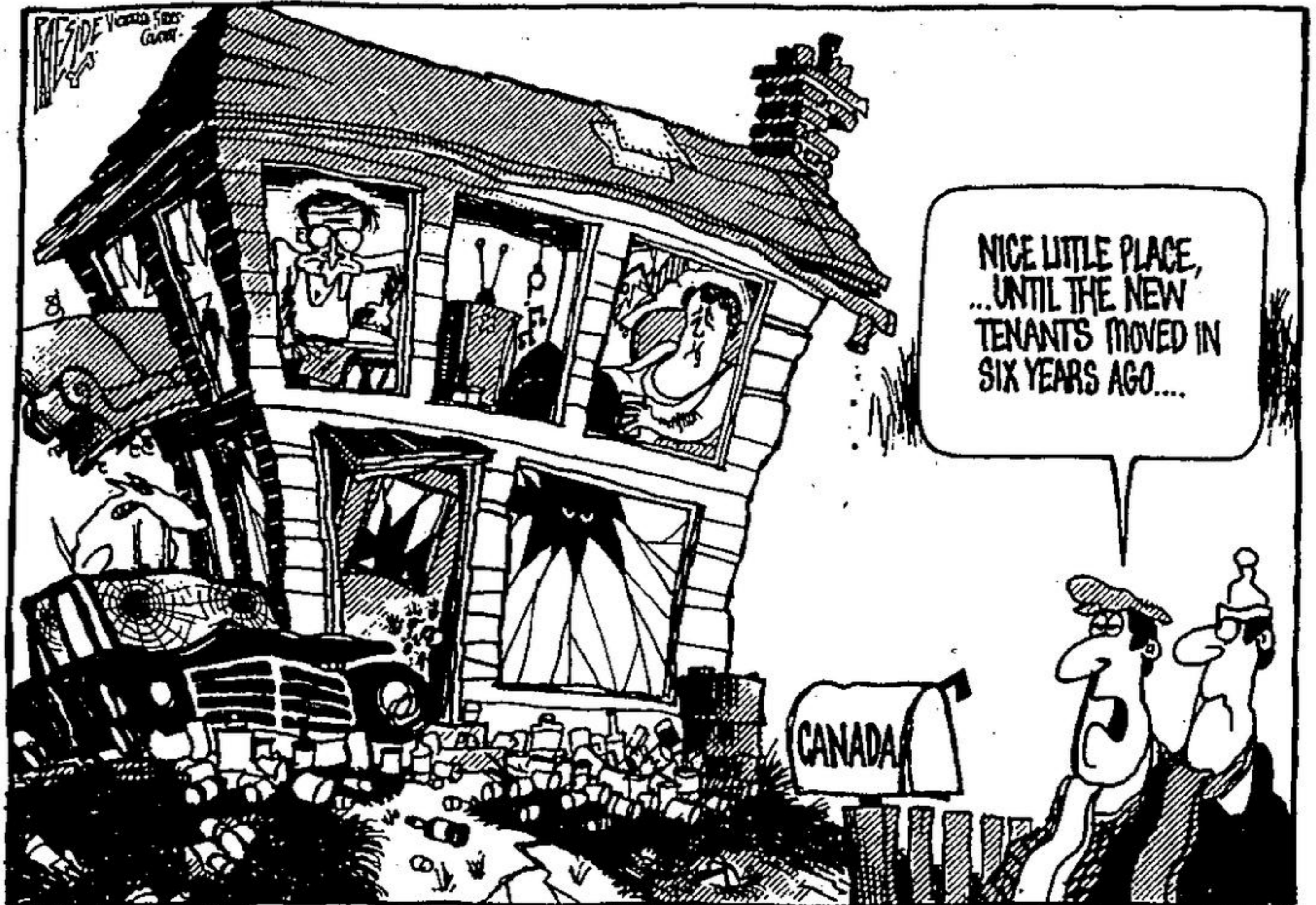
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Poets' Corner

GOD'S CRYSTAL SCULPTURES

Into the night of the wintery forest, fall frozen pellets of rain. I look and see the reflecting rays of the moon's lightning beams on the glistening ice shells sheltering the scantily dressed trees.

Those trees whose colours remain are ragged green cones. While beneath the frozen floor under the crusted snow are all of the shades of green, yellow and orange covered, waiting for the spring and I gaze thoughtfully into the wintery Portfolio of God.

Lonnie Patenaude, Acton.

ALONE

He loved her with a passion. And for her each day he had a smile. But she was blinded, fading and her vision was blurred. Their love was shared always together and never alone. She didn't understand why it had to be and she looked for the answers. The reward was great, for she wanted to go. The love of God guided her. Her time spent alone. Ceased.

Sue White, Acton.

THE CITY

I have watched and wondered As the colours turn to grey I've seen the metal machines and the factory dreams. I've just got to get away. I have seen the captives Of the drugs of power and steel. And the aching in my head and the concrete bed.

Lois Richardson, Georgetown.

And how the politicians kill our dreams.

I have learned the language Of the darkness that walks the streets. I've seen all the cattles minstrels Who know all the singers they meet. I can recall when the lyrics were strong. And the music filled the air. But the minstrels crying Cause the musics dying In the cities everywhere.

Tim Tibblits, Acton.

THE BEAUTY OF LOVE

Love is perpetual need of emotion
Inspired with care,
Acquisition of devotion.

Love allows each, to be what we are.
Acceptance of love ...
Leaves a beautiful scar.

Love knows no age, no color or race.
Grows with beauty,
Unchallenged with grace.

Love is pure form of thought,
While 'hate', on the other hand,
Has to be - taught!

Lois Richardson, Georgetown.

NEVER?

We are born
With such fanfare.
We don't know
What is out - there!

We live without
A net
Who knows
What we may regret?

We're never too young
To know.
We're never too old,
To grow.

Manners Police Suggested

I'm sorry, but I can't hold out any longer.

In recent months, many, many people have written me to say: "Ian, we would like you to add your voice to the growing chorus of right-thinking persons who are demanding that the government establish an organization to be known as the Royal Canadian Manners Police.

"The Manners Police," these letters have continued, "would be empowered to arrest people who behave obnoxiously in public places. Officers would take such people to one side, explain gently to them why their behaviour is offensive, and then beat them with large planks."

I have consistently written back to say that I cannot support this movement.

"While I applaud your concern with good manners," I have written, "I don't believe we should start beating people with planks, especially large ones."

But I've changed my mind. I've been forced to. Last Friday night, The Love of My Life and I went to the movies.

You remember the movies, of course. Movies are something we went out to see in the Dark Ages, before VCRs were invented.

Until Friday night I hadn't been out to a movie in ages. About three minutes into the feature, I began to remember why.

It has to do with the number of movie-goers who seem reluctant to believe that anything happening on the screen could be remotely as interesting as the private discussion they're generously prepared to share with the rest of us.

Which raises the question: whatever happened to the quaint

Weir's World
by
Ian Weir
Thomson News Service



notion that adults should be seen but not heard when in the presence of other adults who have paid \$7.50 to watch something else? Or to put it another way: how come so many of us have lost the knack of shutting up?

Now, it's possible I'm just oversensitive to background noise. As I've frequently point out (politely) to The Love of My Life, I have trouble enjoying a TV show when the person beside me is munching popcorn.

On such occasions, The Love of My Life munches some more popcorn and observes that, if I'm interested in debating noise-pollution, she'll fire up the chainsaw and try to imitate the sound of my snoring. At which point I resolve to sulk through the rest of the show, and make irritating little sucking noises with my teeth.

But I digress. We were discussing people who chatter happily away in movie theatres. Like the couple sitting directly behind us on Friday night, who were having a wonderful chat by the time the opening credits had finished.

Naturally, this raised the usual philosophical questions. Do people talk through movies

out of primal insecurity? Do they fear that, if they remain silent in a darkened theatre, they will just disappear into Nothingness? If so, do they mistakenly assume that this would be a great loss to the rest of us?

It's often argued, of course, that people talk in theatres because they're so used to watching videos at home that they forget the difference.

This has always struck me as a feeble argument. People who mistake a movie theatre for their rec-room are obviously very rich people, whose rec-rooms seat 200 and have concession stands in the hall.

Anyway, I suffered in silence through 20 minutes or so of "What did he say?" and "I just hate her hair-do." But by the time they progressed to "That reminds me of something Nancy said this morning," I couldn't take it any longer.

I turned wrathfully in my seat, preparing to wither them with my very best "O ye of execrable manners" glare. That's when I froze.

They were Senior Citizens. One does not glare at Senior Citizens. The very thought of doing so conjures up a vision of one's own mother, gazing tragically and murmuring: "I have raised a son who glares at the aged. I shall go to my grave a broken woman."

So I mustered a ghastly little smile instead, and hunkered back down to enjoy the remaining 90 minutes of their conversation.

That's when I reached my conclusion. The only answer is the Royal Canadian Manners Police.

But skip the planks, guys. They're elderly.