



Beaver Bob

The Castor springs lose

The Castor burst forth from the surly bonds of winter in about the last week of March. Dark puddles began growing on the ice, like a rash on a human body. Then the dark streaks ran together and the ice began to crack and break up wherever there was fast water to hasten it along.

Big chunks broke off and slid down the current to pile up below the Russell bridge or hang up on the old cement footing for a few hours until another big piece came along and pushed them off.

When the big pieces hit, there was a grinding noise and a flurry of small water spouts in the air.

After three or four days of smashing and grinding, the river was clear, flowing smooth and unfettered to the dam where it hurled itself down with mad abandon.

But for upwards of ten days, the Castor from where the three branches came together below Cochrane's was a river to be reckoned with, filling the entire width of the old river bottom carved out down through the ages.

The Castor flexed its muscles, hurled its gathering power down the winding trough of the years, swollen and furious in its eager desire to reach the sea.

One could readily see how in years gone by, this was a river which could carry its share of a logging drive down to the Nation.

Meanwhile, the sun dried up the patchwork of snow on the fields. By a million hurrying runnels, the Castor received new supplies of water. The ground became wet and dark with the up heaved spines of last year's plowing. Sudden little lakes appeared on the fields, ran up to the road, did not quite dare cross and pulled back after a day or so of inquiry.

Day after day the flocks of geese stitched their way across the sky. A great snowy owl was seen on a snowbank on the North road and another, or the same one in Russell Village.

No muskrats, beavers or turtles had as yet made their appearance.

A hawk took to hovering along the North road and another was seen surveying the morning traffic on 417.

Every day, new flights of geese, the great honkers winging their way north; great flights of 50 or 100 and smaller flights of twenty or less, stragglers, no doubt from the main bodies.

They flew at about five or six hundred feet, trying to identify landmarks from last year, fitting the new highway into the pattern of previous years searching for familiar water.

Sometimes, in their flight pattern, the big birds appeared confused, as though what they badly needed was a few experienced air traffic controllers.

Generally, they appeared to be

making for the Ottawa, although ready to investigate the Nation or even the Castor.

The birds were back right on time from their wintering in South Carolina and Georgia and Mexico. Some even got as far as the Caribbean and South America.

For the first week or so after their return, quite a few birds continued to fly in flocks, perhaps through force of habit. That was broken up when the nesting instinct asserted itself.

So much for spring. We are pleased to report from the banks of the Castor, that another spring made its appearance pretty well on schedule, heralded by several weeks of cold, cold, cold weather, followed by mean, nasty, drizzling rain and ushered in by a grey curtain of mist and dampness. The sun, we are sorry to report, has yet to make his official, full-time appearance on the Castor.

By the time this comes out, if it escapes the editor's basket, we may have seen the sun in at least a few really warm days.

That is all that nature needs. Sun brings growth, new buds, blossoms, greenery everywhere, and, let us face it, insects, bugs and worms. When this comes about, we know that God is in his heaven and all is right with the world, or at least that part of it which man decides does not require his immediate intervention.

Backtrack




'37 WASHOUT

These two pictures sent along by K. Hay of Weston, Ont. show the "Big Flood of '37" when the Castor River rose to record levels washing out part of the old Russell Village bridge. That wood and stone structure was replaced by a steel bridge still standing.



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