

Early birds wait for 'real' spring

Mournful cries shrill across the afternoon. The Kildeer are back in their northern territory again. Early they are this year that one wonders.....What are they finding to eat?

A couple of early arrivals of the Juncoes flitted hither and thither across the yard this afternoon. They seemed bemused at the snippy cold and snowbanks still decorating the fields and yard. Do they surmise, Hey there are redpolls and pine grosbeaks gobbling here and there across this yard. Maybe we can find food enough to sustain us until REAL SPRING'S arrival. I wish you well, fellas.

The returned crows know this has gotta be where we ate so well last year. Howcum there's nothin'

Helen Atkinson

Birdsongs from Helen

spread for us now?

They yelled from the tree tops madly, loudly this morning. Going out with a dish of bread bits and leftover meat fat it seemed surprising that they shut up on the instant the backdoor opened. I walked across the yard to where I feed them, or I should say fed the two scamps all last year.

"CAW-CAW-CAW, here she is guys. Lookit the big dish she's carrying." And the loud happier-sounding caws let me know they were saying, "Good-morning to you and the food you're bring-

ing." And a good-good morning to you guys, I called as I started toward the house. Immediately my back was turned they were down gobbling as fast as they could but taking time out to CAW-CAW loud and clear, "come on guys the food is here again."

Red winged blackbirds are back early this year, very early in plenty of time to welcome spring. Have had none in my yard as yet but see them along the backroads. Their pesty cousins, the starlings, have returned, though. Plus the blackbird hordes should be here



very soon.

Had a thrill the other morning. "Helen, come here quick!" I hurried to the den from the living-room to see what was up.

"Look just easing through the poplars over there."

A coyote strolling along, weaving sedately through the poplar grove to the north of the house. "He's after the four half-tamed hares that have been fed all winter inside the boat house! Or he knows and can smell the four or five grouse that contentedly eat the offered wheat," I yelled.

"Nah, I don't think so. More than likely he can smell the rest of the fish I dumped yesterday."

"Where on earth have you kept it since we cleaned out the freezer?"

"In the feed shed until everything else we dumped had been cleared away."

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Who are the real Canadians anyway

If you're going to believe all the rhetoric going around these days, the only 'real' Canadians are those of either Indian or French origin--the so-called 'aboriginals' and 'founders' of this country.

Well, bully for them. Now, where does that leave the rest of us 'immigrants' from other countries? Way out in left field with some kind of second-class citizenry just because our ancestors happened to 'come along a little later', according to pundit Pierre Berton.

Well, maybe Mr. Berton can slough us off with such an off-hand remark in his latest foray to these boondocks to enlighten us natives as to the unwisdom of our "bigotry and red-neckness" re the language debate currently broiling about. But if he thinks that dealing with the DEFEATED French of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in a 'civilized fashion' by making this country bi-everything is the answer, then he's got another think coming.

I would like to ask Mr. Berton why it is that the French of

Olga Landiak

Life, According to Baba

Quebec are NOT considered bigoted and red-necked re Mr. Bourassa's French-only-sign law which must surely be a danger to the lives and limbs of any English-only-speaking tourist venturing into their territory. Surely Mr. Berton can see beyond his long nose that something very valid is gnawing away at the sensibilities of the rest of us 'who came later', that unless we are ALL treated alike in our laws and legislations, then this nation will never be a true nation, but a fracturization of various ethnic groups.

What, are we less Canadian than the Indians (whose ancestors, incidentally, also Migrated here from the land mass we now call Asia), with their ever loon-looney cries of "We were here first and so we should have prior-

ity in everything--land, money and rights!" Oh sure, after the rest of us built up this country from their stagnant hunt 'n grunt culture to this technological marvel of sweat 'n get.

And why are the French in other parts of Canada wanting to soak us via our tax dollars to maintain their language and culture? The rest of us nicely manage to retain our individual ethnic cultures and languages via our homes, social groups and privately-funded schools. Why can't the French do the same?

Is it asking too much of the Quebecois French to drop their demands for a 'unique society' status at the expense of the rest of us? Can't they become Canadians FIRST? Evidently not. Some people like Lise Bisonette, a French journalist who appears on



radio programme "Morningside" with irritating regularity, considers herself French FIRST, and proud of it, as do most other Quebecois. (Her words, not mine.)

Okay. So if it's so difficult for our dear French friends to come down off their high horses and muck about in the market place with the accepted working language of English, then I say good-bye, adieu, farewell. My heart will not be broken if they decide to become an entity unto themselves. Just as long as they don't ask us to foot the bill for

some poney 'sovereignty association' deal.

We'll finally be rid of the horrible expense of bi-lingualism, yet another school system for mere handfuls of students, and all that unnecessary translating. Not to mention the insidious infiltration of Quebecois Ministers and M.P.'s into positions of governmental power from which they too often flog only their point of view.

Get rid of Quebec, and maybe finally we'll have politicians (the people's servants, hah!) who will truly represent us because they won't be looking over their political shoulders forever and a day at the votes to be gained in that province. Right now, with all three leaders of the present Parties making a stand for the ratification of the infamous Meech Lake Accord, WHERE is the vote-power of those of us who want to make our stand AGAINST it?

Nowhere in sight. So much for our much-vaunted Democratic System.

Golden Horseshoe losing glitter

The United Church of Canada has made a very interesting decision, that might just be the beginning of an important economic trend, with promising consequences for northern Ontario. The church has decided it no longer wants to locate its national headquarters in Toronto, because life in the Baby Apple is getting too darned expensive. The 600 jobs that go along with the national headquarters are now "up for grabs".

Elliot Lake went after those jobs, and invited the United Church to move north. The church decided to say, "thanks, but no thanks" to Elliot Lake, even though the offer of affordable housing and a comfortable, and a lifestyle close to wilderness, seemed attractive. Operationally, the church needs to have its national headquarters close to an international airport, because its staff do a lot of international work. Connections from Elliot Lake to Capetown or Geneva are, to say the least, not the best.

But the fact that the United Church wants to leave Toronto at



NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders

all is a very good sign of promising economic opportunities for northern Ontario. Life in Toronto, or nearly anywhere in the Golden Horseshoe, is getting out of social and economic control. Only the very rich can afford what was once described as "a modest family bungalow", now costing in excess of a quarter of a million dollars. I have met personally, in the last year, three different people who refused job offers in Toronto. Even though the salary and promotion were tempting, when these families looked at the comparative cost of living in southern Ontario, and considered the lifestyle issues of daily commuting, they ruled out moving to Toronto. Economically and socially, these

people decided they're better off where they are, outside the Golden Horseshoe.

Has the Golden Horseshoe lost its shine? As a northerner, I can only say "I hope so". The more people choose to define "success" in terms other than "making it in Toronto", the better off the north will be. The United Church's decision to leave Toronto may thus be the break we've been looking for.

How many other office-based jobs are there in the Golden Horseshoe that, from an operational point of view, could be anywhere? With modems communication systems like modern to link computers, and fax machines to bypass Canada Post, offices today can literally be any-

where. Businesses and service industries dependent on "thinking power" may even function better when the employees aren't stressed out with \$1,000 a month mortgage payments, an hour or more each way to and from work on public transit, and air pollution reaching toxic levels.

Economic development officers in northern Ontario please take note! For years, economists have told northerners that we have little chance of attracting industries to northern Ontario because the economy is geared to a certain level of scale in the south. The auto industry is the one pointed to most often as an example. We can't likely dream about having a Toyota plant in

Ear Falls, for example, because Toyota needs to be near its suppliers. If it's too far away, then Toyota has to pay too much to get its supply or parts, and pay too much to get its cars to the biggest market. This way, the economists argue, the south is the first choice of manufacturers. Then, once the manufacturers are there, the spin-off industries follow close behind, using exactly the same logic. For years, this spiral has meant the south gets richer and more populated, while the north gets depopulated and more dependent on resource industries.

But the United Church's decision to leave Toronto may be the signal that this economic spiral has run out. Economic pressures may be starting to push jobs north, instead of south. The demand for housing in the south.. The demand for housing in the south has driven housing prices up astronomically. As rents and mortgage payments rise, so do demands for higher wages and

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