

No way to prepare for the worst of Ethiopia

From page 10.

tences. We heard: "He's very grateful to Canada." What else? "He's happy now."

It didn't seem malicious or even deliberately deceptive. They were eager to please. That's what they thought we wanted to hear. There was little we could do.

We traveled in huge sport utility vehicles, sometimes on roads, often on little more than donkey tracks.

It was a wake-up call for someone who used to think it would be nice to have an

SUV to drive to Wal-Mart in three inches of snow.

We emerged from those trucks bruised from the ride, muscles aching from clenching the handholds to keep ourselves upright.

And no matter what our destination, whenever we asked how long or how far the answer was always the same: "Thirty kilometres — good road." It became an inside joke.

But it's not really funny. More than half of Ethiopia's people live six hours away from the nearest road — by

foot. Their entire lives are consumed by walking to market, or for water, and back. They don't have cars, they don't need roads.

We spoke with few women, despite our best efforts. Mostly it was because men do the talking, but also because we couldn't get close.

The women were always in the background, working while the men talked, hauling water or wood or children on their backs.

We couldn't get near their grass and mud huts; we did-

n't get inside even one the whole trip. In many villages, if we could coax a smile from a woman or two, we considered it a victory.

We saw terrible poverty in Ethiopia, terrible suffering. But we eventually realized we were being carefully kept from the worst of it.

We didn't see overcrowded orphanages with malnourished and dying children.

We didn't see the stench-ridden, filthy hospitals where AIDS patients line the corridors.

We didn't see babies crying in hunger inside tiny dirt-floor huts, where the average couple has five and six and seven children.

Perhaps it's just as well. There are already images in my head I'll carry forever.

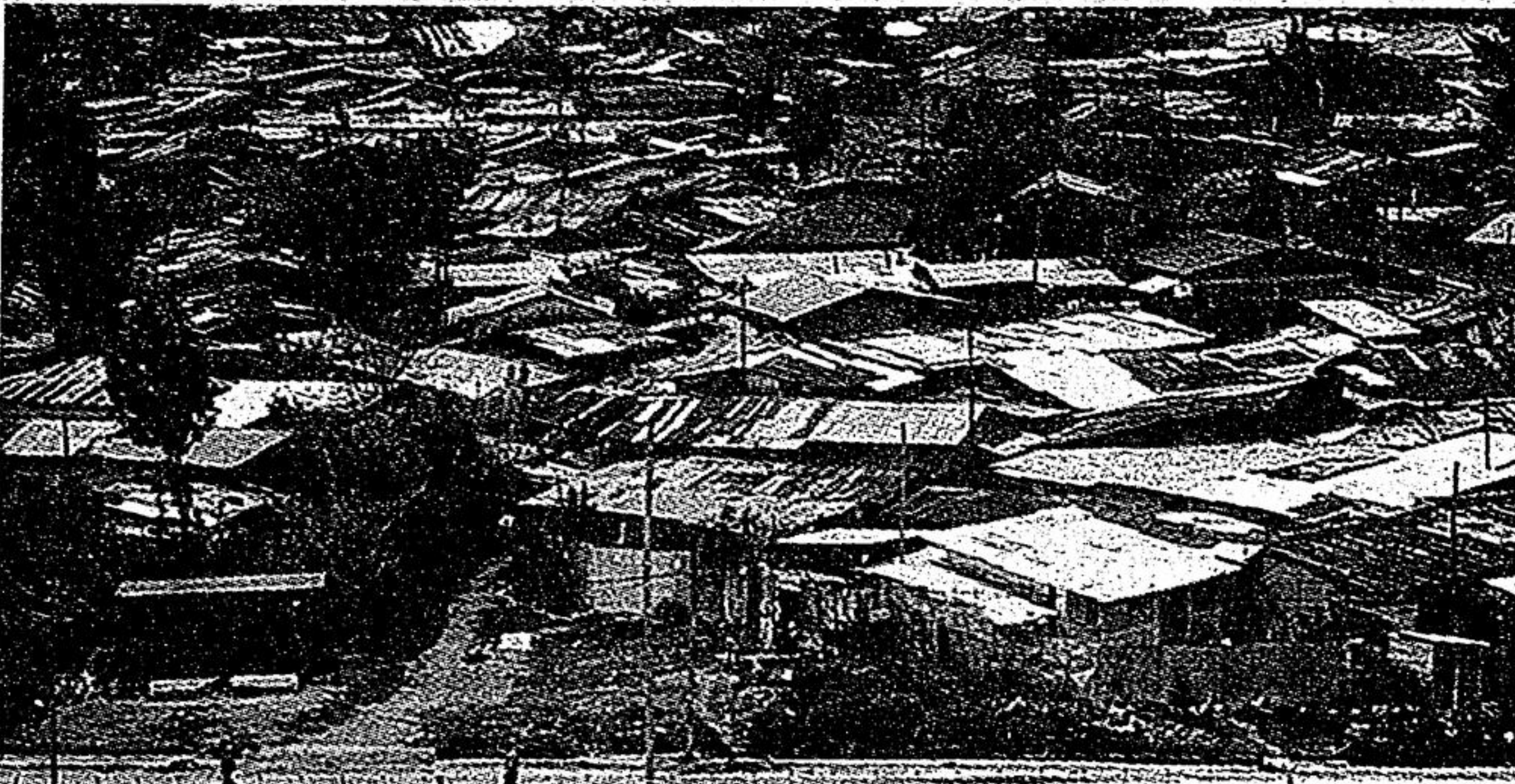
You can't prepare yourself for how people live in devel-

oping nations because you cannot understand it.

Even when you see it up close, there's no way to fit it into your well-fed, well-clothed, suburban life of luxury.

Walking into Loblaws a day or two after getting home was one of the more emotional moments of the whole experience.

We are so fortunate. Half the world is starving.



STAFF PHOTO/KATHLEEN GRIFFIN

This was the view from staff writer Kathleen Griffin's hotel room at the Hilton, Addis Ababa. The rooves are corrugated tin. Compared with many others, especially those in rural areas, this is considered a good neighbourhood.

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PlantSmart Gardening Tip
Planting of Rose Bushes

1. Prune off any broken or bruised roots and branches and soak the roots in water anywhere from an hour to 24 hours before planting.
2. Dig a hole at least twice as wide and deep as the extended root system to allow room for future growth and adequate drainage.
3. Prepare a soil mixture of 2 parts loose top soil to 1 part moss. Place 6" of this mixture in the bottom of the hole and build a cone-shaped mound in the hole.
4. Place the plant in the hole, spreading the root system over the cone-shaped mound of soil. The graft or bud union (this is the spot, generally a couple of inches above the roots from which the branches start to grow out of the trunk or stem of the root system) should be about 1" below ground level. Fill the hole 2/3 full of loose soil mixture and tramp the soil with your foot to eliminate air pockets.
5. Soak thoroughly with water and allow time for the water to soak in, then fill the hole to ground level with loose soil mixture again. Firm the soil mixture with your foot. Create a saucer of the soil around the plant to hold water and maintain this saucer for at least 2 months until the plant is established.
6. Trim back all roses to 4" above the ground level, water thoroughly at least once a week depending on soil and weather conditions and fertilize periodically in accordance with the instructions provided by the fertilizer supplier.

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