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ately, and we keep working towards the youngest. We're always getting them at a point where they're old enough to band, but not old enough to fly out of the nest. And when we go to the nest, there are two of us who go--at least two. One climbs and one bands. It's good to have at least two people who can climb in case the climber gets into trouble. Because you're climbing about 50 feet in the air, and it's usually a big tree. You're dealing with a bird that weighs 8 or 9 pounds when you get up there. The talons are almost as strong as an adult, and they have the beak as well. So you'll sometimes get a talon mark or a talon scratch, or you'll sometimes get the beak pecking at you. So it's quite dangerous work. We have ropes and a bag to put the bird in. We lower them to the ground. You'd never want to be working with a bird that's fighting you up in the nest. You get it to the ground and the other person can handle it. They usually calm down right away. When you're trying to band you need both hands, because you have pliers and things to put the band on, and you're trying to hold the bird. And if on top of that you're trying to hold yourself in the tree.... So it's much easier to lower the bird to the ground, let the other person band it, weigh it, take some measurements of its bill and its leg and wing length--and then put it back in the nest. The adults don't bother you while you're doing it. The adults stay away. Sometimes an adult will come back and actually perch itself in a tree next to you and watch the whole operation. The young can take care of themselves--they're very strong, as I've said, they can do you some damage. The adults aren't territorial in that way--they won't actually attack you--unlike some other species of birds. And as far as anything else happening to endanger the bird, no. We do it at a time when it's just the optimum time--when the bird's old enough so that it doesn't matter that the adult's away a little while. In fact the adults usually are spending more and more time hunting anyway, because the birds are very, very hungry. (At a nest, how many birds are you usually finding?) We've found up to three. We have seen as many as four eggs, but the most young we've ever seen at a nest are three. You go up there. You take one at a time and usually talk to the other two and calm them down. They'll calm right down again within minutes, as long as you just stay close to them, but don't approach them. We're usually not at a nest more than 45 minutes to an hour. Often, if it's a hot day, you'll see them panting quite a bit, but that's about all. And they'd be doing that anyway, being that far up. You know, the direct sunlight on them; there's no shading, usually. (We have a picture of one sitting with wings spread wide....) That was more of a threat gesture than panting. Sometimes it looks like they're making a ferocious snarl at you, but usually when their beak is open and you can see the tongue moving and the chest moving quite a bit, they're panting. That has the effect of cooling them off. In your last eagle article, it said that a lot of eagle nests were found on cliff faces. We've only found, I think, maybe Your Country Homestead Is It Properly Insured? Joseph Salter's Sons Ltd. North Sydney Telephone: 794-4717 BRIAND'S CAB visit Cape Breton TOURS 564-6161 see the beautiful CABOT TRAIL 564-6162 CHICKEN CHALET l'ntii'loy 5outlets to servelfou-



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