

FOR THE BIRDS

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(From "Bred Any Good Rooks Lately?")

Okay, this is a science fiction joke.

It seems like in 1995 or so the pollution in the atmosphere of London has started to kill off all the rooks. And the city government is very concerned because the rooks roosting on the cornices and the odd little crannies of the public buildings are a big attraction. The Yanks with their Kodaks, if you get it. So they say, "What are we going to do?"

They get a lot of brochures from places with climates similar to Londonas so they can raise the rooks until the pollution problem is finally licked. One place with a similar climate, but low pollution count, turns to be Bangor, Maine. So they put an ad in the paper soliciting bird fanciers and talk to a bunch of guys in the trade. Finally, they engage this one guy at the rate of \$50,000 a year to raise rooks. They send an ornithologist over on the concord with two cases of rook eggs packed in these shatterproof cases - they keep the shipping compartment constantly heated and all that stuff.

So this guy has a new business - North American Rook Farms, Inc. He goes to work right off incubating new rooks so London will not become a rookless city. The only thing is, the London City Council is really impatient, and every day they send him a telegram that says: "Bred Any Good Rooks lately?"