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Adoption law struck down after two days

'RIGHT OF PRIVACY'

Court challenge closes records to both sides

By KATIE ROOK

Adoptees and birth parents will no longer be privy to the personal information contained in adoption records after Ontario Superior Court yesterday struck down nascent legislation that allowed past adoption records to be opened.

Toronto human rights lawyer Clayton Ruby, who had issued a Constitutional challenge on behalf of three adoptees and a birth parent, argued that the Adoption Information Disclosure Act did not sufficiently protect those involved in an adoption who wished to remain anonymous.

"Governments in the last 10 years have been eating away at privacy provisions. There is more and more disclosure, less and less protection for privacy in government records everywhere and that's an ongoing trend. This is a welcome look at that trend saying, 'No, you can't continue this,'" he said. "My clients are very relieved."

"There is a right of privacy for all kinds of personal information in government records that government has been dealing with as if it were theirs. What the decision makes clear is that [is not the] government's to deal with."

Under legislation that only took effect on Monday, adoptees and birth parents could apply for information in adoption orders and original birth records. Those who preferred not to be contacted could put a no-contact notice on their file.

Yesterday's ruling, issued by Justice Edward Belobaba, quashed that legislation. Attorney-General Michael Bryant may appeal or go to the legislature and have the law re-enacted.

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RALLYING CRY WITH '60s ECHO



POUYA DIANAT / ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

Students in Atlanta, Ga., on Tuesday protest criminal charges laid against six black teenagers in Jena, La. — known as the Jena Six — in the 2006 beating of a white student. Today, thousands of protesters are expected to march in Jena, a town of 3,500.

Dangling noose recalls old demons

Klan-era tactics in a town in the U.S. South

By SHELDON ALBERTS

JENA, LA. • It all began with the nooses hanging from the "whites only" tree.

Not many of town's black residents saw them, three neatly tied ropes dangling from the branches of a leafy oak in the courtyard of Jena High School, but word spread fast.

And no one had to guess at the message being sent.

"The nooses are a symbol of black people being hung," said Tina Jones, a Jena resident who still shakes with anger at the memory.

"They used to lynch black people years ago like that. It's offensive to black people."

More than 60 years after the last known lynching of a black man in the state, residents of this tiny lumber town in central Louisiana are enduring a modern-day race scandal triggered by an event that has drawn com-

parison to Klan-era intimidation in the South.

This morning, thousands of demonstrators from across the United States are expected to converge on Jena, population 3,500, for one of the country's largest civil rights rallies since the 1960s.

The protest is being held in support of six black students — including Ms. Jones's son, Bryant Purvis, 18 — who were charged with attempted murder in December after a white teenager was beaten during a lunch-hour melee at the school.

But the circumstances of that fight, black residents say, must be seen as part of a bigger picture that includes attacks on black students and an attempt to erase the last remnants of Jim Crow-era segregation in the town.

At a high school assembly on Aug. 30, 2006, a black freshman asked the assistant principal whether African-Americans could sit under a tree that had traditionally been used only by whites.

The school official replied, "You can sit anywhere you want." See PROTEST on Page A14

Royalties hike would kill 'golden goose'

REPORT ON OILSANDS

Klein warns against change made on a 'whim'

By CLAUDIA CATTANEO AND JON HARDING

CALGARY • Debate raged inside and outside Alberta yesterday over how to fairly divide the spoils from the province's envied oilsands deposits following a government-appointed panel's recommendation that would see oil companies slapped with another \$2-billion annually in taxes and royalties.

"Do they really wish to kill this golden goose with one fell swing

of the tax axe?" said economist Dennis Gartman, editor of the *Gartman Letter*, an influential investment newsletter based in Virginia, who was "shedding tears" about Alberta going "socialist" and wondering whether the provincial government has "gone mad."

"We want out of all things Canadian, and we want so immediately. We can return at a later date, when these proposals are turned down by the legislature involved. Until then, discretion is the far, far better part of valour. Goodbye Canada; it was fun while it lasted."

Even former Alberta premier Ralph Klein emerged from retirement to voice a strong opinion against radical changes, saying he fears for the industry that directly or indirectly employs one in three people in the province.

"There is one thing for sure, we have had a fair and clear and comprehensive royalty regime where the rules are the same for everyone," said Mr. Klein, who helped raise the oilsands' profile globally to attract investment and was one of the architects of the current oilsands royalty regime.

"It was a regime created by industry and government. Those kinds of rules don't change on a whim. Companies are nervous." See ROYALTIES on Page A8

Oilsands stocks fall, Page FP6

ILLEGAL MIGRANTS LURED TO CANADA

Fraudulent sales pitch touts an open-door policy

By ADRIAN HUMPHREYS

A sudden outpouring of illegal foreign migrants from the United States is crossing into Canada because of bogus claims by unscrupulous immigration consultants, a scam that has blossomed into an urban myth so pervasive the influx is clogging refugee services in some cities.

A fraudulent sales pitch touting an open-door policy and "economic refugee" program in Canada, aimed largely at Mexican and Haitian migrants living illegally in the United States, is proving remarkably attractive to migrants already facing crackdowns in some U.S. states.

While several hundred are said to have paid for useless immigration services, many more have heard the message and are heading north on their own.

The Canadian Council for Refugees, a non-profit umbrella organization working to protect refugees, issued a warning this week of the scams and the burgeoning myth and asked the federal government to intervene.

For some, it is already too late. In Windsor, local refugee aid organizations have been told to brace for 4,000 to 8,000 refugee claimants entering Canada through Windsor and other border points.

"We are being inundated with them," said Wilfred Harbin, administrator for the Windsor Salvation Army Windsor Community and Rehabilitation Centre. "What are we going to do with them? We're running out of beds," he said.

The Salvation Army has put up 50 families, some with up to nine children, at four city hotels with the bills, including meals, being sent to the city's social services department. Another 30 single men are staying at a Salvation Army shelter.

In Montreal, hundreds of Haitian asylum seekers have been victimized by consultants, usually in the guise of community or religious groups who charged \$400 to \$500 for false promises of guaranteed refugee status, said Rivka Augenfeld, with the Canadian Council for Refugees.

"There have been hundreds and hundreds. They come up expecting things that are just not possible," said Ms. Augenfeld.

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