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Cossitt affair needs watching

Canadians might be tiring of the Cossitt Affair and its ill-conceived moves by the government to gain the return of secret documents that a Tory MP says he hasn't got. But the price of freedom is vigilance. And Canadians must maintain their watch on the outcome of this affair. It might spell the impotence of parliament and the end of a system which keeps government responsive to the needs of the people.

Solicitor-General Jean Jacques Blais' attempt at heavy-handed measures to gain the return of whatever documents held by the Brockville MP is certainly an attempt to plug a leak within the government. And that touches on the issue at stake.

Consider this:

The fact remains that when governments do not want information to be made available to the people that may be prejudicial to them, (the government) often they assert it is prejudicial to the state," former prime minister John Diefenbaker told parliament.

That is the danger, and once it is accepted that a government can say that a member of parliament shall reveal his sources of information, freedom ends, because no one could communicate, no matter how serious the allegation the individual has in mind, if he realizes that it would be revealed."

And consider this:

"To my mind the basic question is this: If

we are to exercise our rights as members of parliament to express ourselves freely, to be vigorous critics of the government, if we are in opposition, or vigorous back bench members on the other side, it is of the highest importance to protect our sources of information," NDP leader Ed Broadbent said.

He says that the delicate balance between protecting sources and the security of the state must be decided and raises a related question "which is the limits, if any, which should be placed on the right of a member not to divulge his source of information."

There is now no definition in the parliamentary rule book which addresses itself to this particular issue. A parliamentary committee is tackling this subject and will not have an easy time. Until that committee reports, it is expedient upon the government to delay any further action in this comical affair.

The price of freedom is vigilance. It is also the price paid to maintain a democratic principle. The actions taken thus far in the Cossitt Affair smacks of an insensitive autocratic government which is actively seeking to make parliament impotent. This is evidenced in part by the known contempt of Prime Minister Trudeau toward the institution and the placing of various degrees of secrecy designations on documents which have little or no bearing on the operation of government or national security.

PQ's culture minister lacks common sense

Quebec culture minister Camille Laurin, chief architect of the Parti Quebecois government's French language charter, says he counts on the other provinces' sense of "British fair play" to not do what the PQ is doing.

Interesting.

Mr. Laurin's Joan-of-Arc act has featured a loud, emotional campaign to drive every trace of English from Quebec. In a recent magazine interview, he's quoted as declaring the separatist PQ government aimed at "expanding what is French while diminishing what is English."

Just as that magazine hit the streets in Quebec, Mr. Laurin told a press conference he wasn't worried about oppression against French-speaking minorities in other provinces, if Quebec separates from the rest of Canada.

"I have a lot of confidence in British fair play," he said.

He should have. When the British conquered Canada in the eighteenth century, they guaranteed the conquered people's language, social and cultural rights. Peoples conquered by France never were treated so

liberally - as members of the modern autonomist groups in French-occupied Brittany and Corsica can attest.

Relying on the rest of Canada to respond gallantly and liberally to his intensely one-sided separatist approach, Mr. Laurin has a lot of brass but he's not too strong on common sense.

French culture and the French language have survived and grown within British colonialism and Canadian federalism for more than 200 years, even though it's surrounded by the dynamic, expansive Anglo-American culture.

If Mr. Laurin's objective was protection for French culture in Quebec, the logical thing to do would be to continue within Canadian Confederation; it has proved its ability to safeguard French culture.

Independence is strictly a leap into darkness where there are no guarantees that the rest of North America would respect Quebec's cultural distinctions. Isolated, Quebecers then would be at the mercy of men like Mr. Laurin; men who expect restraint and fair play from others but not themselves.

Hamilton Spectator

When Levesque, Laurin attack the press it means their party's in trouble

By STEWART MacLEOD
Ottawa Bureau
Of The Herald

When politicians begin mounting wholesale attacks on the press you can assume that things are not going too well with their political parties. Otherwise, they just smile smugly at newspaper criticism.

In Quebec, the current wave of government criticism being directed at the press has an even greater impact because of the journalistic enthusiasm which greeted the Parti Quebecois government 16 months ago. And the enthusiasm was not confined to the nationalist-inclined French-language media.

The English press, impressed with Rene Levesque's emphasis on "good government" as opposed to separatism, seemed eager to give the PQ government an opportunity to show its stuff. And when the chain-smoking Quebec premier went abroad he was accompanied by more reporters than usually tag along with Prime Minister Trudeau. If the

premier didn't like what the reporters were saying, he certainly didn't say so.

And for the first year or so, Levesque could frequently depend on English-language reporters for the most constructive comments. Given the initial atmosphere existing in Quebec City following the election, it was probably much easier for French-language newspapers to cast the first stones.

DIFFICULT TIMES

Now, however, the Parti Quebecois is being treated like any other provincial government, and its underlying goal of Quebec sovereignty is being buried under such mundane issues as unemployment, industrial stagnation and even the firing of individual public servants.

These are not easy times for governments.

And the other day, after Maclean's magazine published what it claims were the outlines of the Quebec government's white paper on cultural policy, both Levesque and

his cultural development minister, Camille Laurin, hit the roof. It's interesting that both men managed to keep their cool while far worse things were being printed about their controversial language legislation last year.

But at that time, everything else seemed to be running more smoothly.

Maclean's said that the still secret white paper, if it finds its way into legislation, "would mean a new Quebec in which the degree of state control would surpass anything known in North America." The paper, says the magazine, will affect communications, labor relations, housing, health, entertainment, and it will also deal with the compulsory assimilation of Quebec's minority groups.

Pretty strong stuff, but so was the language legislation which also surpassed anything known in North America.

STRONG REACTION

This time, however, the reaction to press criticism was much more severe. Laurin

referred to the story as being "false, distorted and vicious" and he seemed more outraged with comments about it carried on the CTV television network. The CTV report "added the unlimited power of a film blow-up to this perverted analysis, provoking potential fanatics to possible violence."

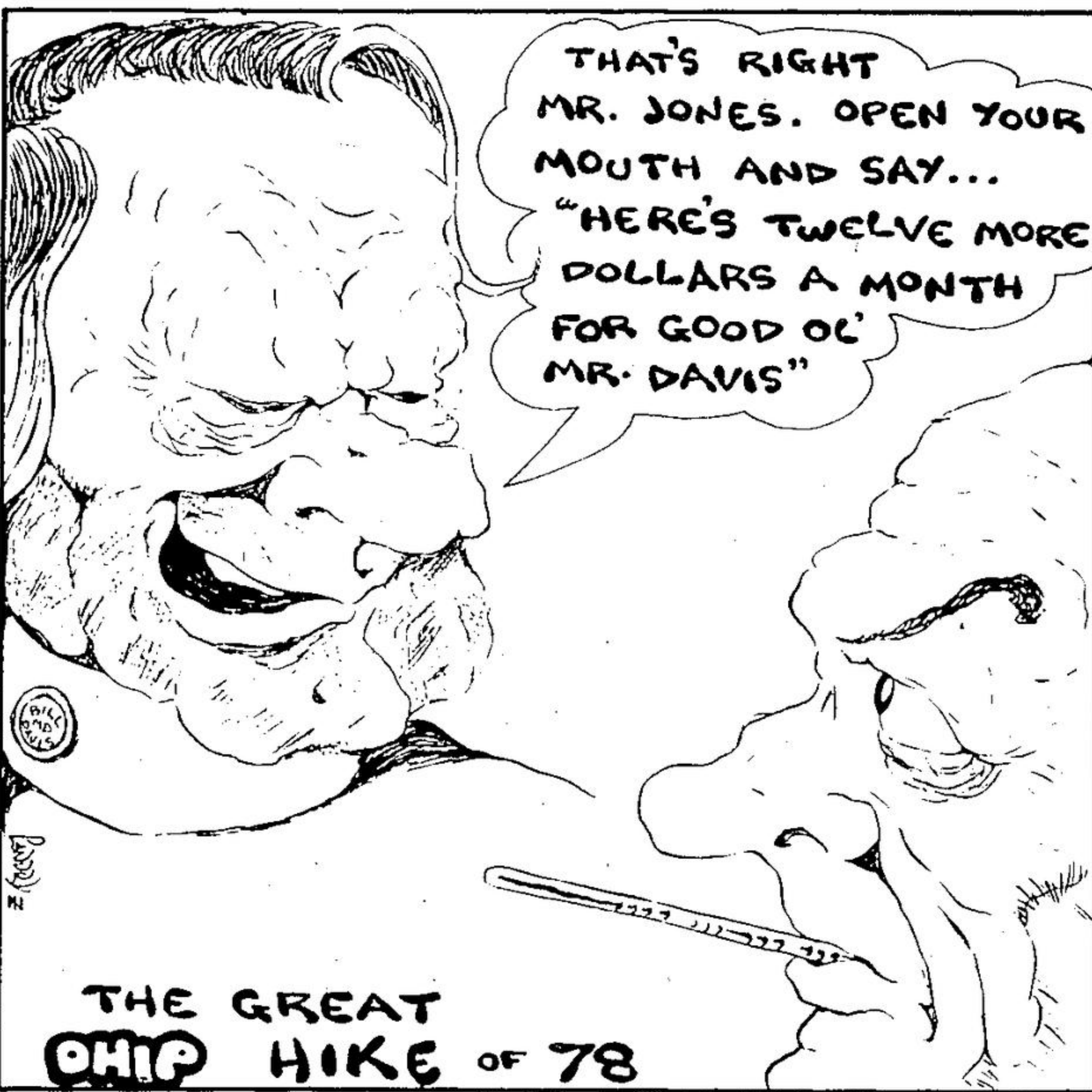
Premier Levesque described the magazine and television reports as "calumny by anticipation." And later he talked about a form of "common front" by some media - "a sort of common front where practically anything goes against the Quebec government."

Laurin said that "for several months I have been described as a Leviathan, and thus received more than my share of flak by most editorialists and columnists of the English press in Quebec and Canada, who would like nothing more than to shoot me down in flames."

"Out of fear, bias or strategy, tiny pieces of fact are grossly amplified and lead to blatant distortions or beserk extrapolations."

Taken together, it is obvious that the Levesque and Laurin comments are aimed beyond the one offending story. A cynic might even suggest they were trying to discredit the press in general.

It will be interesting to watch what effect this may have on recommendations by the provincial communications department for tighter controls over press ownership in the province. One of the recommendations is that an autonomous Quebec news agency be established so the "image of Quebec transmitted in Canada as well as abroad conforms to reality."



McKeough's budget: predictable, safe, traditional

By DEREK NELSON
Queen's Park Bureau
Of The Herald

Predictable. Safe. Even status quo. Just stage two in Ontario Treasurer Darcy McKeough's campaign to bring the province a balanced budget in 1981.

Last year was stage one, with accolades and incentives for government restraint and private enterprise.

That's about all one can say of this year's budget, which just carries on the tradition.

It's negative tax provisions hit relatively few individuals with any force, and the effect of its goodies is equally limited.

By mainly relying upon the private sector for growth McKeough did pretty much what everyone expected.

He did try to reinforce two of the weakest spots in the economy, however - mining and tourism.

PROBLEM AREA

So the seven per cent accommodation tax is temporarily removed, and mining companies will have a total exemption from profit tax on new mines or major expansions of old ones.

But what the budget didn't contain was any tax incentive for business investment. That's an interesting omission.

The treasurer talked in terms of a recovering economy, with growth surging ahead especially in the export and consumer spending fields.

But what will ensure the recovery is an increase in business investment, and that unfortunately is projected by the treasury to actually show a one per cent decline (in constant dollars) in 1978.

McKeough realizes the problem exists.

QUEBEC

On the one hand business investment tends to lag behind other areas of the economy when bloom times return. So he expects a "substantial resurgence" of investment as times get better.

On the other hand two factors external to Ontario might wreck all his calculations. He acknowledges their importance, but not that they might defeat all his plans for growth.

Separatism in Quebec and the slide of the American dollar continue to produce uncertainty in businessmen who might otherwise be tempted to invest here.

NOT SURE

So there's probably an element of relying on a wing and a prayer in the somewhat rosy projections in the treasurer's budget document.

Last year's budget also talked of recovery, which didn't occur to anything like the degree predicted. The 1977 deficit exceeded that of 1976.

Still, McKeough's position remains firm.

"My expectations, therefore, is for a steady expansion of private sector jobs, private sector incomes, and private sector prosperity of lasting benefit to all citizens."

Government restraint and private enterprise will lead the way to stage three of recovery next year, he in effect says.

Looking through our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO

The 50-50 Club of Georgetown United Church presented a new idea in parties Wednesday night in the Sunday School rooms which was advertised as "Your own birthday party." Twelve tables were arranged about the room and guests sat at the table which corresponded with their birth month. Each table had been arranged by a couple who are members of the club.

Expansion of the Red Cross Sick Room Supply Loan Cupboards, which served more than 10,000 home patients in Canada in 1947 depends on contributions to the national campaign for \$3,000,000 opening March 1. Crutches, wheelchairs, hospital beds and other expensive and hard to obtain supplies are loaned free of charge.

Just because February had an extra day this year, it must have felt entitled to a real spree. The week-end was a great variety of weather - perhaps it was trying to set March a bad example.

Believe it or not, the maximum temperature for the month of February was 1/2 degrees ABOVE the NORMAL of 27, but the minimum was almost seven degrees BELOW the NORMAL of 13 degrees.

In Council today a letter from the Ontario Department of Health emphasized the need for chlorination of Georgetown water.

ERIN GO BRAGH
by Sylvia Vincent

In the valleys and the green hills
The feel of Ireland can be sought
'Twas here St. Pat was missionary
Where Christianity he taught.

St. Patrick was a gentle soul
Who lived 400 years A.D.
He spent his youth as captive slave
So missionary vowed he'd be.

He broke his bonds of slavery
But real freedom came from his creed;
Of this he spoke to everyone
From rich to the poor in their need.

Of understanding, too, he spoke
Yes! of each other's point of view;
To stop, to think, how each can blend
So more peaceful lives may pursue.

On 17th of March, once more
To mind comes the gist of his plea
St. Patrick spoke for all his kind,
Erin Go Bragh - 'oh! - Ireland, Go Free.

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Time goes by so slowly except when you're having fun

By GERRY LANDSBOROUGH

Often in these early March days the winter blahs catch up with me and for awhile "time" hangs heavy on my hands. Time is funny like that. Have you ever noticed how quickly time slips by when you are deeply absorbed in something? Time has a movement all its own that makes it appear to speed by or to drag according to whatever you are doing.

I've always been rather preoccupied with time and how I spend it. Looking back I've devoted a great deal of time to just plain waiting. Waiting for something to start or something to finish - waiting for the birth of a child - waiting for that child to grow - waiting for news either good or bad in someone's troubled life - altogether many countless hours upon hours spent just waiting. I guess to some degree that can be said of all of us.

Have you ever noticed how, teenagers

especially, and young people in general, never seem to have enough time. Whatever is asked of them the answer invariably is "I don't have time."

No time. How strange for as the years slip quickly by we become painfully aware of so many things that we older folk were also going to accomplish but alas "I didn't have enough time."

Somewhere in my files is the name and story of a conglomerate wizard (lost for the moment but I'll find it later when I get time) whose day was a succession of decisions and meetings. He wanted very much to paint and was really quite good at it - a natural talent - but he found that during the course of his busy day and evening his schedule just didn't allow for it. He decided however that painting was important to him so he arose every morning at 5 a.m. instead of 7 so that he could pursue that which he so enjoyed. He increased his day by 2 hours to find the necessary "time". I guess the moral here is that we will always find the time for anything that is really important to us. Finding the time and the control of that time is one quality that is found in the lives of all successful people.

Time is our single most valuable possession. Though we seldom see its worth until our youth is already spent.

When you are young time is an endless sea stretching out before you. Somehow you sense that your time has limitations but that is so far away so very far down the road.

As the years slip by we discover what a trickster time is. How often have you looked at the face of a friend or a relative not seen for awhile and noticed the change. They are older. Yet we are never quick to notice that change in ourselves.

All at a sudden out of nowhere it seems the years have slipped by and we are faced with what is termed middleaged crisis. The "time of youth" has passed and we begin to catch the first glimpse of old age approaching. Here for awhile time becomes a grim task-master.

Wrinkles never noticed before appear to stand out as deep crevices and our faces become lines with valleys and rivers that no

one else really seems to pay much mind to. Each falling hair is the forerunner of complete baldness and countless hours are spent contemplating our fading youth.

At this time in life people often throw themselves into a frenzy to stay young and relive the time of their youth. It's very sad for nothing looks as out of place as misspent youth on an obviously aged body.

Time has tricked us once again, and after this mad quest for lost youth passes most people slip comfortably into the middle years as one does when slipping into a comfortable pair of old sneakers.

Somewhere in the middle years for the first time we consider dying. Before then death was something that happened to someone else but as the years pass by we become very conscious of just how much "time" we have left.

Our lives are really lived in borrowed time - we all have to pay the piper. For some there is hardly enough time and for others death is a mercy, a sweet blessing.

In the twilight years time again becomes an ally and the days stretch out again as in our youth. The happiest people I know are those who have slipped comfortably into aging. They have learned the wisdom of passing years, that each one brings about its own "time" of beauty.

I believe in an "appointed time" as in Ecclesiastes that there is a time for every purpose under heaven. If that's the case this must have been my week for thinking about it.

'Till next week I wish "you" - time, time for loving and time for living and most of all the time to keep on smiling.

Bible digest

"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might gain the fathers of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be... He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Romans 4:18-21

FUNNYSIDE