



AJC-AJJ
ASSOCIATION OF JUSTICE COUNSEL
ASSOCIATION DES JURISTES DE JUSTICE

Press Clippings for the period of March 16-22, 2012
Revue de presse pour la période du 16 au 22 mars 2012

English Media

March 22

Harper's cuts to Canadian pension plans likely to spark national debate

The pension plan for public servants also may be ripe for change. A recent report by the C.D. Howe Institute concluded that if public-sector pension plans used market yields to calculate their liabilities, Ottawa's unfunded liability would be \$227 billion. The government began dropping hints this winter that it is reviewing the pension scheme to ensure it is fair to both employees and "taxpayers" — prompting speculation that Flaherty will announce that public servants will see their contribution rates, set for 40 per cent in 2013, ultimately rise to 50 per cent.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/Harper+cuts+Canadian+pension+plans+likely+spark+national+debate/6342709/story.html>

Budget cuts will cost lives: PSAC

Canada's largest public-sector union is warning deep cuts to the federal budget will result in contaminated food, suffering veterans and lives lost at sea.

<http://www.metronews.ca/ottawa/local/article/1131201--budget-cuts-will-cost-lives-psac>

Flaherty promises moderate budget

Bragging that Canada under his government's watch is in decent fiscal shape, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said Thursday he has no need to bring in a slash-and-burn budget next week.

<http://www.torontosun.com/2012/03/22/flaherty-promises-moderate-budget>

Supreme Court ruling lets lawyers talk tough with judges

The Supreme Court of Canada has given lawyers a green light to criticize judges with toughly worded passion, provided they do not veer into the sort of invective that would earn public disapproval.

In a decision that provides badly needed guidance to the legal profession, the court said lawyers enjoy a constitutional right to vent their spleen about judges or the justice system.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/supreme-court-ruling-lets-lawyers-talk-tough-with-judges/article2377884/>

March 21

Public service unions abandon neutrality to challenge expected Conservative cuts

The white-collar professionals who work in the federal government are breaking their silence as loyal and neutral public servants with the launch of an unprecedented social media campaign that attacks the Conservatives' looming spending cuts as undermining the health and safety of Canadians.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/technology/Public+service+unions+abandon+neutrality+challenge+expected/6338914/story.html>

PSAC mounts anti-cut campaign in advance of federal austerity budget

The Public Service Alliance of Canada demanded the federal government halt plans to cut public services Wednesday, as it launched a major campaign to oppose of the austerity measures expected in the March 29 budget.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/health/PSAC+mounds+anti+campaign+ahead+federal+budget/6337071/story.html>

Public servants urge feds to reveal the cuts they say will hurt Canadians

Public servants took to Parliament Hill Wednesday to divulge major gaps in services at their departments, as they decried the cuts expected in the upcoming budget.

<http://www.globalmontreal.com/risky+cuts/6442605221/story.html>

Civil servants say feds must come clean on cuts that will hurt Canadians

The country could see seniors left in the cold, fisherman stranded on cliffs and unsafe food getting to stores if the Conservative government proceeds with billions in spending cuts, public servants warned Wednesday.

Though thousands of civil servants could face layoffs after next week's federal budget, they said their worry isn't about saving their own jobs.

"It's about public safety," said Merv Wiseman, a 35-year veteran of the Canadian Coast Guard.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/business/civil-servants-say-feds-must-come-clean-on-cuts-that-will-hurt-canadians-143651186.html>

With cuts already hitting services, union wants Tories to show budget hand

Public servants are stepping out of the backrooms to issue rare public warnings that government cutbacks are already hurting vulnerable Canadians like veterans and seniors plus putting food and marine safety at risk.

At a pre-budget event on Parliament Hill organized by the Public Service Alliance of Canada – the largest federal public-sector union – civil servants shot back at criticism they are simply fighting to protect their jobs.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-notebook/with-cuts-already-hitting-key-services-union-presses-tories-to-come-clean/article2376578/>

It's time to talk about judges' pay

With our federal finance minister looking at tightening public sector pensions in the upcoming budget - even hinting at tweaking the Old Age Security system - he would be remiss not to initiate a discussion with the Judicial Benefits and Compensation Commission.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/time+talk+about+judges/6333530/story.html>

PSAC fights cuts with an angry squirrel

The Public Service Alliance of Canada is launching an advertising campaign against possible cuts to its membership in next week's federal budget. It features a rather mean and somewhat large squirrel. Reporter Jeff Davis attended the launch and described it this way:

<http://blogs.canada.com/2012/03/21/union-fighting-possible-budget-cuts-with-an-ad-featuring-a-giant-squirrel-with-attitude/>

Public servants with disabilities fear cuts

Some federal bureaucrats with disabilities worry next week's budget — and the job cuts expected to follow — will give managers an excuse to lay them off.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2012/03/21/ottawa-ps-cuts-disability-fears.html>

Federal Budget 2012: Stephen Harper to reverse spending, hiring sprees

The March 29 budget will mark the end of the spending and hiring sprees undertaken by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government since 2006.

While the need to shrink government has always featured prominently in Conservative rhetoric, since taking power the Conservatives have actually run up annual federal spending to \$276 billion — an increase of nearly 30 per cent.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/1148280--federal-budget-2012-prime-minister-stephen-harper-to-reverse-spending-hiring-sprees>

Better economy, lower spending give Ottawa wiggle room in budget

A sudden change of economic circumstance could blunt the blade of Jim Flaherty's budget axe next week, economists say.

With the economy on the rise and spending below target, the government and its finance minister find themselves with the flexibility to craft a 2012 budget that works down the deficit while promoting economic growth, economists predicted Wednesday.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/Better+economy+lower+spending+give+Ottawa+wigggle+room+budget/6337980/story.html>

Federal public-sector union wants Ottawa to name names

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) is not happy.

It seems that the federal government's upcoming budget is going to destroy the economy and throw tens of thousands of people out of work. And that's bad. Worse: They're doing it by stealth. (Aside: Is "stealth" turning into the new code-word for hidden agenda or is it just me?) PSAC is particularly miffed that Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's austerity budget, set to come down on March 29, won't go into specific details of what will be cut. It seems more likely that it

will say, for example, that Ministry X is set to see its budget shrink by 5%, meaning, 350 fewer jobs. But it won't elaborate about which specific jobs Ministry X will lose, or what programs will be shut down.

<http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2012/03/21/matt-gurney-federal-public-sector-union-wants-ottawa-to-name-names/>

March 20

Air Canada pilots launch Charter challenge against back-to-work legislation

Air Canada pilots have launched a constitutional challenge in Ontario court against federal back-to-work legislation passed last week that prevents a strike or lockout at the country's largest carrier.

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/air-canada-pilots-launch-charter-challenge-against-back-to-work-legislation/article2375170/?utm_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm_source=Politics&utm_content=2375170

Air Canada pilots challenge back-to-work law Law breaches charter rights, pilots say

Air Canada pilots are challenging the federal government's back-to-work legislation, asking Ontario's Superior Court to rule that the law breaches their charter rights.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2012/03/20/pol-air-canada-pilots-challenge-legislation.html>

Unions challenge Bill C-33 Allege workers' rights violated

The Air Canada unions that were subject to a back-to-work bill last week say they will mount a legal challenge of the new legislation alleging it is unconstitutional.

The Air Canada Pilots Association (ACPA), which represents 3,000 pilots at the airline, is expected to file its legal challenge of Bill C-33 in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice by early Tuesday morning.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Unions+challenge+Bill/6327600/story.html>

Not golden handshakes

Reports of rich public service severance packages exaggerated.

The CBC have given a lot of play to a Greg Weston story that allegedly generous severance payments to public servants amounting to as much as \$2 Billion will be triggered by job cuts in the upcoming Budget.

"The Harper government's plan to slash an estimated 30,000 public service jobs over the next three years includes hefty golden handshakes that could leave some federal workers laughing all the way to the bank."

No source for the calculation is given in the story, and the only reaction apparently solicited was from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation who responded predictably:

"Public service severance packages are far out of line with anything in the private sector," the federation's Derek Fildebrandt said. "It's far out of line with Canadians' reasonable expectations."

<http://www.straightgoods.ca/2012/ViewArticle.cfm?Ref=249&Cookies=yes>

Austerity budgets in Ottawa, Ontario raise risk of labour unrest

A coast-to-coast spring of labour unrest is poised to escalate next week as Ontario and Ottawa deliver budgets that aim to save billions by shedding thousands of government jobs.

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ontario-federal-budgets-spell-trouble-for-labour-unrest/article2374582/?utm_medium=Feeds%3A%20RSS%2FAtom&utm_source=Politics&utm_content=2374582

A western lesson in deficit fighting

As Ontarians await the budget that will launch five years of government austerity, it's instructive to look at how another Liberal government, this one in British Columbia, handled a similar problem with much better results.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/western+lesson+deficit+fighting/6327346/story.html>

Justice delayed: Courts too slow in getting records online?

An Ontario judge's rant on the province's "antiquated" paper-based court system is bringing attention to the problems Canada's legal system is facing in going digital.

Ontario Superior Court Justice David Brown bemoaned the issue in a March 14 decision on a disputed condo development. Court was delayed because staff had to search through piles of paper records to find crucial documents, racking up legal fees and other costs for those involved, he complained.

<http://blogs.canada.com/2012/03/19/justice-delayed-courts-too-slow-in-getting-records-online/>

Editorial: Golden parachutes

Cuts only take federal civil service back to status quo

It doesn't take a math whiz to add up the cost of a continuously expanding and contracting public service.

In March 2006, a month after Jim Flaherty was named Finance minister and two months before he delivered the Harper government's first budget, there were 249,932 federal employees. By the time Flaherty delivers his latest budget at the end of this month, the size of that workforce will have grown to more than 282,350 positions. The payroll cost in wages and benefits this fiscal year will be \$42.3 billion.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/opinion/editorials/Golden+parachutes/6322862/story.html>

Supporting a bill that would bring transparency to union funds

Merit Canada has been supporting South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale MP Russ Hiebert in his efforts to pass a bill that would bring transparency to union funds.

If the bill is passed, unions will have to make public their finances. This transparency includes assets, liabilities, expenses and salaries of officials.

That would bring them in line with charities and Aboriginal organizations, which get federal tax treatment similar to unions, but with much more transparency.

<http://www.journalofcommerce.com/article/id49236/--supporting-a-bill-that-would-bring-transparency-to-union-funds>

March 17

Departments brace for major cuts

Review by small group of Tory MPs aims to trim at least five per cent from budgets

They're a small group of nine Conservative parliamentarians, mostly cabinet ministers, who carry enormous clout in shaping the future of the federal government and public service - and they also carry a big axe.

Led by Treasury Board president Tony Clement (chairman) and junior finance minister Ted Menzies (vice-chairman), the subcommittee on the strategic and operating review is the small panel heading the government's search for up to \$8 billion in annual savings over the next few years.

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/news/Departments+brace+major+cuts/6318064/story.html>

Most Canadians oppose budget's pension cuts: poll

Bad news expected later this month

Canadians are bracing themselves for a bad news budget from Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government and are firmly opposed to the Tories' plan to slash the public pension system for future senior citizens, a new poll has found.

The national survey by Ipsos Reid, conducted for Postmedia News and Global TV, suggests while Canadians are ready for a March 29 austerity budget that slashes government spending to reduce the deficit, the public has not yet accepted Harper's argument for why the pension system needs to be cut.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/most-canadians-oppose-budgets-pension-cuts-poll-143035495.html>

March 16

Alternative Federal Budget 2012: A budget for the rest of us

Canada's job market remains stalled and Canadians are understandably anxious about their future, and increasingly question whether their children and grandchildren will do better than they did. In fact, the latest job numbers have revealed that tens of thousands of Canadians have lost hope and given up looking for a work.

<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/behind-numbers/2012/03/alternative-federal-budget-2012-budget-rest-us>

A summary of the 2012 Alternative Federal Budget

The following is a 10-point summary of the CCPA Alternative Federal Budget released yesterday.

The federal government is planning an unprecedented fiscal austerity budget, claiming that massive cuts to public sector jobs, services and social programs are necessary to pave the way for jobs and growth. But in fact, the opposite is true. Austerity programs weaken the economy, and their implementation in many European countries has tipped the E.U. back into recession, fuelled unemployment and increased their debts and deficits.

There is a better way to make the federal budget work for the rest of us. The Alternative Federal Budget (AFB) proposes a sweeping anti-austerity agenda that will yield high returns, boost productivity, stimulate private investment and create high value-added jobs in activities that improve living standards and reduce income inequality.

<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/progressive-economics-forum/2012/03/summary-2012-alternative-federal-budget>