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Press Clippings for the period of June 8-14, 2012
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English Media

June 14

Time to probe public pay, pensions and perks

Last week it was revealed that tax-payers paid \$1.2 billion in severance to federal civil servants who continued working, retired or quit their jobs in 2011.

Do we need further evidence that the system of public-sector negotiating is broken, and that those who negotiate on behalf of taxpayers have failed to protect them?

<http://www.theprovince.com/business/Time+probe+public+pensions+perks/6780400/story.html>

Modernizing 'dinosaur' courts

Wish list to improve the justice system in Ontario

The next deputy attorney general in Ontario will face an outdated court system that cries out to be modernized during a fiscal crunch.

The province is looking for someone to fill the pivotal leadership in the ministry, following the retirement of Murray Segal on May 31. What is certain is that Segal's successor faces pressing challenges in overseeing the administration of the courts.

<http://www.lawyersweekly.ca/index.php?section=article&volume=32&number=7&article=1>

June 13

Public-sector wage curbs subject of legal appeal

The federal government's curbs on public-sector wages are subject to an Ontario Court of Appeal hearing today.

Crown lawyers argue the legislation enacted in 2009 violates their rights to bargain collectively for more money.

Known as the Expenditure Restraint Act, the law was a response to the global economic slump.

It essentially limited wage hikes for about 400,000 federal workers for five years retroactive to 2006.

<http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/Canada/20120613/public-sector-wage-curbs-appeal-120613/>

Ontario teacher unions have a public relations problem

The re-election of Scott Walker as governor in Wisconsin's recall election has been called a critical blow to teacher unions. After stripping the state's teachers and other public employees of their collective bargaining rights, it was hoped he would be removed from office. But with a barrage of ads attacking the "selfish" unions, he was re-elected by an even larger margin than in 2010. Perhaps even more concerning for the unions was that exit polls showed that nearly a third of union voters themselves voted for Walker as did half of voters from union households.

All of this portends tough times for teacher unions who are on the defensive from B.C. to Chicago to Ontario. And it appears that they have a serious public relations problem.

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1211072--ontario-teacher-unions-have-a-public-relations-problem>

June 12

Federal government fights for limit on Crown pay raises

Lawyers help people seek justice and fight for their rights, but what happens when lawyers say *they* have been wronged and need justice?

They hire a lawyer.

Federal Crown attorneys have done just that in their bid to seek justice from, well, the Justice Department.

“Lawyers also need legal representation and (legal) advice like everyone else,” said Andrew Lokan, a Toronto lawyer representing about 2,700 federal Crowns who have taken their employer — the Canadian government — to court over a longstanding salary issue.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1210316--federal-government-fights-for-limit-on-crown-pay-raises>

Feds, lawyers to square off over wage curbs

One of the pillars of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s response to the global economic crisis takes centre stage Wednesday, as Ontario’s top court is asked to weigh in on a feud pitting the Conservative government against its own lawyers.

At issue before the Ontario Court of Appeal is the Expenditure Restraint Act, which the government enacted in March 2009 as the world economy collapsed.

<http://metronews.ca/news/canada/260311/feds-lawyers-to-square-off-over-wage-curbs/>

RCMP's labour relations scheme valid: court

Ontario’s highest court has ruled that the RCMP’s current labour relations scheme does not violate the freedom of association guarantees in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, overturning a lower court decision which said the RCMP have a constitutional right to form an independent labour association.

<http://www.ohscanada.com/news/rcmps-labour-relations-scheme-valid-court/1001452671/>

Courting disaster: What do you do with repeat offenders?

In this three-part series, the National Post takes a closer look at Ontario’s crowded court system. Today, part two: The impacts of career criminals on the province’s already overtaxed courts.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/06/11/courting-disaster-what-do-you-do-with-repeat-offenders/>

Courting disaster: How increased digitization of court records could streamline system

In this three-part series, the National Post takes a closer look at Ontario’s crowded court system. Today, in part three, Megan O’Toole examines the records system experts say is a decade behind other Canadian jurisdictions.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/06/12/courting-disaster-how-increased-digitization-of-court-records-could-streamline-system/>

Rethinking our approach to labour relations

As Wisconsin voters were getting set to vote in favour of their labour-bashing governor in last week's recall election, the Ontario Court of Appeal released a decision that put a damper on union rights in this province.

To be fair, despite looming battles over government plans for a public-sector wage freeze, Ontario is unlikely to see a wide-ranging attack on unions on the lines of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's reforms in that state.

Nevertheless, in ruling on RCMP officers' fight for traditional collective-bargaining rights, the appeal court delivered a blow to the so-called Wagner approach to labour relations with its reaffirmation of the notion that s. 2(d) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms "does not guarantee any particular model of labour relations."

<http://www.lawtimesnews.com/201206119154/Commentary/Editorial-Rethinking-our-approach-to-labour-relations>

Tories 'in contempt' after withholding civil service cut data from budget watchdog

The Conservative government is again showing contempt for Parliament by refusing to release key information in its latest budget, the NDP charged Monday.

NDP House Leader Nathan Cullen is asking the Speaker of the House of Commons Andrew Scheer to rule that the government has breached MPs' privileges by withholding data requested by the independent parliamentary budget officer.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/06/11/tories-in-contempt-after-withholding-civil-service-cut-data-from-budget-watchdog/>

Christy Clark sets sights on public-sector benefits

"A lot of middle-class families are struggling to make ends meet," Clark says on the video.

"And I want to be sure that the wages and benefits for unionized government employees aren't out of step with people in the private sector. If there is a wage and benefit gap between public- and private-sector employees, is that a problem? It's a fair question to ask because, after all, it's taxpayers' money."

<http://www.theprovince.com/business/Christy+Clark+sets+sights+public+sector+benefits/6766337/story.html>

Feds to pay out \$6.1-billion in severance owed to public servants: public accounts

The federal government is working on paying out more than \$6-billion in severance owed to public servants who are still working in government or who decide to leave their jobs voluntarily, according to the public accounts and senior bureaucrats.

[http://www.hilltimes.com/civil-circles/politics/2012/06/11/feds-to-pay-out-\\$61-billion-in-severance-owed-to-public-servants/31063](http://www.hilltimes.com/civil-circles/politics/2012/06/11/feds-to-pay-out-$61-billion-in-severance-owed-to-public-servants/31063)

Who did in the public-sector unions? They did

Wisconsin was the first of the states, in 1959, to guarantee collective bargaining for public-sector workers. In granting workers the right to join closed-shop unions, the state essentially surrendered its right (or its ability) to manage its own tasks. Perceptive people – among them, Nobel laureate economist Friedrich von Hayek – could already anticipate the consequences. Once unions acquire special privileges, Hayek wrote in the following year's *The Constitution of Liberty*, these privileges become the law of the land – “and can be removed only by special legislation.” Fifty years later, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker proved Hayek right.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/who-did-in-the-public-sector-unions-they-did/article4243559/>

June 10

Nunavut beefs up courtroom security

The Nunavut government has passed legislation to beef up security in its courtrooms. Under the law, court sheriffs will have new powers and new weapons.

Currently, any member of the public can walk into a courtroom. But under the new legislation, that will change. Justice Minister Daniel Shewchuk said court sheriffs will be able to search spectators and refuse entry to people they deem to be a security risk.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/story/2012/06/10/north-nunavut-court-security.html>

June 9

Courting disaster? The long, long wait for justice in Ontario

In this three-part series, the National Post takes a closer look at Ontario's crowded court system. First of three parts:

Inside a richly appointed courtroom on the fourth floor of the Ontario Superior Court in downtown Toronto, Justice Ian Nordheimer is flipping through his calendar. In seconds, he pinpoints the first available trial date for Brian Dickson, accused in the high-profile “webcam slaying” of a York University student: April 2, 2013, nearly a year after last month's court appearance and two years after the crime.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/06/09/courting-disaster-the-long-long-wait-for-justice-in-ontario/>

B.C. judges in court over pay increase

A B.C. Supreme Court justice will take some time to decide whether to give provincial court judges a pay raise.

After three days of submissions, Justice Malcolm Macaulay on Thursday reserved decision on the civil lawsuit launched by the province's 146 provincial court judges against the B.C. government for refusing to increase their pay and benefits.

<http://www.timescolonist.com/business/judges+court+over+increase/6757077/story.html>

June 8

MLAs let Nunavut courtrooms beef up security

Expect tightened security in Nunavut courtrooms later this year.

The Nunavut Legislative Assembly passed an amendment to the Judicature Act June 8 to give court sheriffs more tools for ensuring courtrooms in Nunavut are safe.

http://www.nunatsiagonline.ca/stories/article/65674mlas_let_nunavut_courtrooms_beef_up_security/

First wave of 2,200 federal public servants faces layoffs

About 2,200 of the thousands of federal public servants who have received affected notices since the March budget are losing their jobs and facing layoffs.

So far, the number of layoffs is a fraction of the more than 18,200 notices that departments have handed out in three waves since the budget announced annual spending cuts of \$5.2 billion that would eliminate 19,200 jobs by 2015.

<http://www.canada.com/business/First+wave+federal+public+servants+faces+layoffs/6748150/story.html>

Médias francophones

13 Juin

Les avocats de la Couronne veulent invalider le contrôle des dépenses

Les procureurs de la Couronne croient que la loi promulguée en 2009 viole leur droit de négocier collectivement des augmentations de salaire.

La Loi sur le contrôle des dépenses avait été mise en place en raison de la récession économique mondiale. Elle limite les hausses salariales pour environ 400 000 travailleurs fédéraux pendant cinq ans, et ce, rétroactivement à l'année 2006.

<http://www.droit-inc.com/article7796-Les-avocats-de-la-Couronne-veulent-invalider-le-contrôle-des-dépenses>