



Association of Justice Counsel Association des Juristes de Justice

1545 av. Carling Ave., #406, Ottawa, ON Canada K1Z 8P9

TEL: 613-798-9900/866-218-3310

FAX: 613-564-0606

www.ajc-ajj.com

admin@ajc-ajj.com

Press Clippings for the period of February 10-16, 2012
Revue de presse pour la période du 10 au 16 février 2012

English Media

February 16

Feds have already cut half a billion dollars and more than 2,000 PS jobs in 2011-2012

The government has already cut more than a half a billion dollars and more than 2,000 jobs from the public service this year alone, according to what will likely be the only detailed and publicly-available account of where the cuts to the public service fell in 2011-2012.

<http://www.hilltimes.com/news/2012/02/13/feds-have-already-cut-half-a-billion-dollars-and-more-than-2000-ps-jobs-in-2011-2012/29595>

Across Canada, economic woes put public-service pension plans in the spotlight

From fewer firefighters in Saint John to increased taxes in Montreal and Regina, the battle to control public-service pension plans is hitting home for Canadians across the country.

Governments at all levels are grappling with massive deficits in their public pension plans thanks to a combination of factors, including low interest rates, sluggish investment returns and an aging work force that is retiring in record numbers.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/across-canada-economic-woes-put-public-service-pension-plans-in-the-spotlight/article2341570/>

Austerity isn't for everyone

Is anyone else getting tired of being lectured about austerity by wealthy consultants in expensive suits who charge \$1,500 a day for their advice and have comfortable government pensions, besides?

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/Austerity+everyone/6166686/story.html>

Clement sees irony of gag order on spending cuts, vows transparency

Tony Clement recognizes the irony.

The Treasury Board President's favourite speech of late is a proclamation of the virtues of open and transparent government. Yet this week his own department issued what appears to be a government-wide gag order that would keep the details of spending cuts secret months after Budget 2012 is released.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/clement-sees-irony-of-gag-order-on-spending-cuts-vows-transparency/article2341523/>

Federal departments told to keep mum on cuts

The Conservative government has ordered federal departments to refrain from putting any details about reductions caused by anticipated spending cuts in their annual reports to Parliament.

Treasury Board has sent a memo to all chief financial officers directing them to release their reports on plans and priorities without including any information on the cuts from the Conservatives' strategic and operating review that will be announced in the upcoming budget.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/Federal+departments+told+keep+cuts/6167442/story.html>

Liberal MP slams lack of transparency on PS cuts

Canadians won't know what programs and services they could be losing in the Conservatives' next round of spending reductions until they're gone, warns Liberal MP John McCallum.

McCallum said the lack of transparency around the government's spending restraints so far have effectively silenced any public debate on what programs and levels of service Canadians are prepared to give up in the name of austerity.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/Liberal+slams+lack+transparency+cuts/6160107/story.html>

Canadians support cuts to federal workforce: Poll

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty has the backing of Canadians to slash federal jobs, according to a new poll that suggests reducing the deficit should be the cornerstone of the government's upcoming budget.

<http://www.torontosun.com/2012/02/15/canadians-support-cuts-to-federal-workforce-poll>

<http://abacusdata.ca/2012/02/15/the-federal-budget-and-public-service-cuts/>

<http://abacusdata.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Public-Service-Cuts-Release-and-Tabs-February-2012.pdf>

B.C. courts 'bleeding' from understaffing

Simmering discontent over clogged courts in British Columbia boiled over on Wednesday, with Premier Christy Clark being grilled over delays and a provincial judge asserting that recent judicial appointments are doing nothing to ease the congestion.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/british-columbia/bc-courts-bleeding-from-understaffing/article2340122/>

'Abysmal' B.C. courts see more cases tossed

Four more suspected criminals — including an accused Internet child predator and an alleged drunk driver — have escaped convictions because of the bloated caseload of British Columbia's courts, prompting one judge to issue a direct attack on Premier Christy Clark and her government's handling of the matter.

In one ruling out of New Westminster, B.C., Judge Daniel Steinberg called the current state of the provincial court in B.C. "abysmal."

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2012/02/15/bc-cases-thrown-out-court-delays.html>

B.C. seeks to 'modernize' court system

A day after appointing nine new provincial court judges, the B.C. government has launched its latest review of the court system, trying to identify why the courts are slowing down despite falling crime and case rates over the past 20 years.

<http://www.caledoniacourier.com/news/139361698.html>

February 14

What the #!%*?: B.C. legal troubles may see 2,500 cases thrown out

British Columbia's justice system is facing a tipping point, with a massive backlog that may see more than 2,500 cases thrown out of court. In this occasional feature on a complex issue, the National Post's Ian Vandaele takes a look at what went wrong:

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/02/14/what-the-b-c-legal-troubles-may-see-2500-cases-thrown/>

Fix public sector pensions before OAS

In one of the fastest growing campaigns ever launched by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), over 26,000 small - and medium - sized businesses (SMEs) have signed petitions calling for fairness in Canada's public sector pension system. Today, CFIB is delivering these "action alerts" to MPs in Ottawa.

<http://www.keremeosreview.com/opinion/139322313.html>

Why cuts to courts are bad for business

Around 1996, I had lunch with a client who had moved to Vancouver from Hong Kong, but he still had a significant business presence in the soon-to-be-former British colony.

I asked him whether he was worried about Hong Kong being ruled by China instead of Britain.

His answer surprised me. He wasn't as concerned about who had "political sovereignty" over Hong Kong as much as he was worried about a functioning judicial system, operated on the basis of the Rule of Law, which allowed litigants (in his case businesses like his) to obtain speedy justice in fair and unbiased courts.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-managing/leadership/why-cuts-to-courts-are-bad-for-business/article2336857/>

Canada Budget 2012: Moody's, Fitch Ratings Question Need For Ottawa's Austerity Agenda

The federal government doesn't need to ramp up spending cuts, and implementing them could harm Canada's economy as it struggles with weak global demand, two major ratings agencies have said.

Steven Hess, the lead Canada analyst for Moody's, told the Wall Street Journal that there is a "risk to growth" if the government moves too quickly with austerity measures designed to return the country to balanced budgets.

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/02/14/moodys-fitch-ratings-canada-budget-cuts_n_1276861.html

February 13

Legislation limiting strikes ruled unconstitutional

The Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench has ruled new legislation limiting the ability of public sector workers to go on strike is unconstitutional.

"This is an extremely important decision for working people, not only in Saskatchewan, but for those across the country," said Larry Hubich, president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL). "

<http://www.journalofcommerce.com/article/id48715/--legislation-limiting-strikes-ruled-unconstitutional>

Omnibus crime bill could free more accused criminals

The federal government's proposed omnibus crime bill could free more accused criminals than it incarcerates, according to the Canadian Bar Association and some lawyers.

In Canada, the Askov ruling happens when a judge determines whether an accused's right "to be tried within a reasonable time" has been infringed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It means any case that drags out for an unreasonably long time can be dismissed.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2012/02/13/ottawa-crime-bill-backlog-courts.html>

Walter Cordery: Justice review much needed

Premier Christy Clark's announcement that she's launching a five-month review to determine how her government can make the justice system more efficient, comes not a moment too soon.

However, despite recommendations from the right, left and members of the legal community, Clark is refusing to commit more money to the justice system, despite an internal government audit revealing the system is about to suffer a short-fall of at least \$53 million.

<http://www2.canada.com/nanaimodailynews/news/story.html?id=2ac4c1a2-26c2-41d9-ae6-38f22850fa7c>

'Disgusting' court backlog may free hit and run accused

The family of a young mother killed in a hit and run is outraged that the case against the alleged driver is among thousands in B.C. at risk of being thrown out because of a huge court backlog.

"We were told it could possibly get thrown away — because of time delay," said the victim's father Colin Ogilvie. "That is one of the concerns of the Crown.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2012/02/10/bc-court delays.html>

26,000 small business owners call for public sector pension fairness

In one of the fastest growing campaigns ever launched by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), over 26,000 small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have signed petitions calling for fairness in Canada's public sector pension system. Today, CFIB is delivering these "action alerts" to MPs in Ottawa.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/582394>

PSPP hasn't been taken off chopping block as feds look to possible reforms

Talk on the Hill has been inundated with speculation over where Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his majority-governing Conservatives will look next in addressing Canada's financial woes—and the public service pension remains on the cutting board.

<http://www.hilltimes.com/hill-climbers/hill-life-people/2012/02/13/pspp-hasn%E2%80%99t-been-taken-off-chopping-block-as-feds-look-to/29592>

February 12

B.C. judges go to court over rejected wage hike

The provincial court judges are taking the attorney general to court for a wage hike, with a court date set down for March.

The two sides have traded preliminary shots through court documents.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/bc-judges-go-to-court-over-rejected-wage-hike/article2335964/>

February 11

Budget cuts worry federal unions

As the 2012 federal budget draws near, employee unions are worried about rumours of up to 20 per cent budget cuts and widespread privatization.

Suspensions are running particularly high at Veterans Affairs Canada, which is already set for a cut of 500 from a total 4,100 employees by 2014-15, according to the Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees.

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/canada/61664-budget-cuts-worry-federal-unions>

February 10

Justice review and changes long overdue

Finally, Premier Christy Clark says she is frustrated with growing delays in B.C. courts and launches a five-month review to determine how her government can make the justice system more efficient. This coming from the same person who wanted to waste precious court time broadcasting hockey hooligans.

<http://www.royalcityrecord.com/Justice+review+changes+long+overdue/6131644/story.html>

Public servants, pensioners will never get piece of \$28B surplus, regardless of ruling, federal lawyer says

Public servants and pensioners won't be able to get at any of the \$28-billion pension surplus even if they win their long legal battle and the Supreme Court of Canada orders the funds to be returned to their pension accounts, say federal lawyers.

Peter Southey, lawyer for the Attorney-General, told the Supreme Court judges Thursday that putting the surplus back into the pension accounts would give current and retired federal workers “nothing” because the law only entitles them to the pension benefits they’ve already been promised.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/Public+servants+pensioners+will+never+piece+surplus+regardless+ruling/6129454/story.html>