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Press Clippings for the period of August 5 - 11, 2011
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English Media

August 11

Business View: Payouts to public sector too costly Benefits, pensions burdens on taxpayer

Nations from Greece to the U.S. are facing unprecedented fiscal challenges largely driven by unsustainable government spending on public-sector wages and benefits that outstrip those in the private sector.

Think Canada is immune? Think again. Our economy is in relatively good shape but we have the same fiscal challenges federally, provincially and locally.

In the federal public service, wages and benefits are about 40 per cent more than they are for equivalent jobs in the private sector. The last federal budget took a tentative step in the right direction by eliminating a provision that federal employees get severance pay for quitting their jobs

<http://www.theprovince.com/business/Business+View+Payouts+public+sector+costly/5239353/story.html>

A defenceless economy

Ottawa resembles a northern Ontario mining community these days worrying about layoffs when everyone knows the vein of gold is almost fully exploited.

Talk abounds in this one-industry town about money crunchers being sent to government departments and agencies using the words attrition, layoffs and rightsizing. Employees are being redeployed to find five or 10-per-cent savings. Those numbers can't be found in fewer pencils and paper clips. No, those types of cuts mean people. And that's because the federal government is paying down debt while following its ideological bent of smaller government.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/defenceless+economy/5231396/story.html>

Flaherty stays course on deficit Targets 2014-15; Canada faces \$36B shortfall for its current fiscal year

Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty vowed Wednesday the Harper government will stick to its goal to eliminate the budget deficit by 2014-'15, despite this week's diminished growth south of the border.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Flaherty+stays+course+deficit/5238658/story.html>

Follow Canada's Lead to Reduce Federal Debt

In 1996 Canada's debt to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio was approximately 67 percent -- just slightly higher than the United States' current ratio of approximately 62 percent. Canada's Liberal Party was in charge of the federal government at the time and set out on a determined course to cut Canada's federal deficit and reduce the federal debt as a percent of the economy's GDP. The plan was hugely successful, and when Finance Minister Paul Martin became prime minister in 2003, he continued the policy of spending restraint until he left office in 2006. Martin's successor, current Prime Minister Stephen Harper, continued that policy for the next two years. The result: by fiscal year (FY) 2009, the federal debt had fallen to 29 percent of GDP, say David R. Henderson, an associate professor of economics, and Jerrod Anderson, a second-year master's fellow, at the Naval Postgraduate School.

The federal government achieved these reductions in debt not with large tax increases, but with substantial cuts in government spending.

http://mercatus.org/sites/default/files/publication/Canada's%20Reversed%20Budget.Henderson.5.5.11_0.pdf

August 9

With central services, departments lose

Letter-writer Maryantonett Flumian, Ottawa president of the Institute on Governance, should not be so quick in praising the feds for their recent action to establish a "Shared Services Canada" organization.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/With+central+services+departments+lose/5225019/story.html>

Labour board orders Health Canada to reinstate whistleblower Union deems decision against scientist's colleagues diminishes health and safety of Canadians

The Public Service Labour Relations Board has ordered Health Canada to reinstate an Ottawa whistleblower scientist it fired seven years ago. However, it rejected grievances by two other scientists fired the same day.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/technology/Labour+board+orders+Health+Canada+reinstate+whistleblower/5224999/story.html>

August 8

Public-sector retirees red herring in pension debate

Dan Kelly of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) says the pensions of public-sector retirees are excessive, but he doesn't bother telling us that the average public-sector pension in 2009 was about \$24,500 a year. Hardly a king's ransom after a lifetime of work.

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Public+sector+retirees+herring+pension+debate/5221128/story.html>

Environment Canada in 'complete and utter turmoil' as feds prepare to slash 776 jobs

Environment Canada workers are in "complete and utter turmoil" as 776 public servants wait to learn where they will be working, or if they will be working for the government at all in 90 days, says Bill Pynn, national president of the Union of Environmental Workers, which represents 476 of the workers affected.

<http://hilltimes.com/page/view/envirocanada-08-08-2011>

August 6

Fighting the union mentality

Unsurprisingly, CUPE head Paul Moist's response to the Aug. 2 article on public-sector pensions by my colleague Dan Kelly contains the usual "entitled to my entitlements" mentality that pervades public-sector union types.

However, the numerous inaccuracies in his claims must be addressed.

<http://www.nationalpost.com/news/Fighting+union+mentality/5214934/story.html>

IT spending on the block as Ottawa cuts spending Streamlining aims for security, efficiency

The Conservatives launched a new agency Thursday in an attempt to slash IT costs across the entire government, as part of the effort to balance the budget by 2014-15.

But lumped within the financial savings and heightened security, the move could also result in job losses. Any jobs lost in the move to streamline federal IT systems will come as the new agency, along with 67 other departments and agencies, come up with five-and 10-per-cent cost-cutting plans as part of the government's cost-saving review.

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/spending+block+Ottawa+cuts+spending/5215767/story.html>

Environment Canada to slash 776 jobs

Move will hamstring ability to deliver the science, former assistant deputy minister says

Environment Canada is preparing to cut 776 jobs in the next few months, losing hundreds of experts in climate change, weather forecasting and protecting nature.

Gary Corbett, president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service, said Treasury Board has notified him of 776 impending job cuts, of which 227 affect his union's members.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/technology/Environment+Canada+slash+jobs/5208933/story.html>

August 5

Employment growth slows

Canada's pace of employment growth took a step back last month.

In July, there were 94,500 more people working in the private sector, Statistics Canada said, but 71,500 fewer in the public sector. As well, there was a decline of 15,900 individuals who considered themselves self-employed.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Employment+growth+slows/5210976/story.html>

Is less really more when it comes to government?

These are lean times, and the knives are sharpening for any fat to trim.

In Washington, a deal to lift the debt ceiling sparked \$1.2 trillion in government cuts, with more to follow. Meanwhile, Britain wages jihad against public spending and Greece's public service is on a starvation diet.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/1035493--is-less-really-more-when-it-comes-to-government>

Conservative compensation year for Canadian employers: Mercer survey

Employees hoping for large across-the-board raises in 2012 will be disappointed, as Canadian employers are projecting an average wage increase of 3.1%, according to the Mercer Compensation Planning Survey.

Base pay is considered the most important element of total compensation for most employees, according to a previous Mercer survey, but only 53% said they were happy with what they earned.

In 2011, the average pay increase was 3%, up from 2.7% in 2010 and 2% in 2009.

<http://www.benefitscanada.com/news/conservative-compensation-year-for-canadian-employers-merc-19094>

Canada's Pension Tension

Canada's union leaders may say that pension reform is simply a matter of changing the (Canada/Quebec Pension Plan) CPP/QPP formula in order to give Canadians double the benefits, but this will cost small business owners and their employees in the form of a massive increase in premiums. Yes. Another payroll tax hike, which kills jobs and reduces the take-home pay of every worker. Don't be fooled to think that you'll get double the benefits for nothing.

http://www.cfib-fcei.ca/english/focus/81-canada_s_pension_tension.html

Unions attack CFIB awareness campaign on public sector pensions

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) has learned there are several unions attacking its work in raising awareness of unfair and underfunded public sector pensions. A few weeks ago, CFIB launched a campaign called 'Canada's Pension Tension' and has received several thousand signed petitions from small business owners and hundreds of followers on a Facebook page dedicated to the cause.

http://www.cfib-fcei.ca/english/media_centre/canada/120-social_policy/3029-unions_attack_cfib_awareness_campaign_on_public_sector_pensions.html

Médias francophones

10 août

Le Canada ira de l'avant avec ses coupes budgétaires

Alors que l'économie européenne s'enlise et que les marchés boursiers dégringolent, le Canada maintiendra le cap sur ses grandes orientations économiques, a assuré le ministre des Finances, Jim Flaherty, mercredi.

<http://canoe.com/infos/quebeccanada/politiquefederale/archives/2011/08/20110810-195149.html>

9 août

La Fédération des entreprises indépendantes veut «corriger» le régime de retraite Un lobby s'attaque aux pensions des fonctionnaires

Un des plus importants syndicats de la fonction publique fédérale se défend de représenter des « employés surpayés qui ne pensent qu'à prendre leur retraite aux dépens des contribuables ».

La campagne de relation publique de l'Institut professionnel de la fonction publique du Canada, intitulée « La prospérité : on y gagne tous/Les employés du secteur public à l'appui de l'entreprise indépendante », vise à « rappeler aux Canadiens, en particulier aux propriétaires de petites entreprises, le rôle essentiel que les fonctionnaires jouent en matière de protection de la santé et de la sécurité et à quel point ils sont indispensables au secteur des petites entreprises. »

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-droit/actualites/fonction-publique/201108/08/01-4424478-un-lobby-sattaque-aux-pensions-des-fonctionnaires.php>

L'emploi dans la fonction publique diminuera en 2011

L'emploi dans la fonction publique, au Canada, est appelé à diminuer pour une première fois en 12 ans alors que 600 postes devraient être supprimés cette année.

Selon Heather Hume, porte-parole du président du Conseil du Trésor, Tony Clement, l'emploi dans le secteur public diminuera en raison de la baisse du nombre d'employés contractuels et de la fin de certains programmes fédéraux au cours des prochaines années, comme le Plan d'action économique.

<http://fr.canoe.ca/cgi-bin/imprimer.cgi?id=987456>

Deux employés de l'ARC veulent boycotter certaines PME

Un cadre de l'Agence du revenu du Canada (ARC) a incité les employés du gouvernement à boycotter les membres de la Fédération canadienne de l'entreprise indépendante (FCEI), qui représente les propriétaires de PME.

<http://www.canoe.com/cgi-bin/imprimer.cgi?id=987634>

8 août

« Un triste jour pour la protection des dénonciateurs »

Trois scientifiques en médecine vétérinaire congédiés en 2004 par Santé Canada pour avoir dénoncé des pressions commerciales sont toujours soutenus par l'Institut professionnel de la fonction publique du Canada.

<http://fr.canoe.ca/infos/quebeccanada/archives/2011/08/20110808-141903.html>

5 août

Les régimes de retraites publiques font face à la crise

Le régime de retraite de la fonction publique n'est ni équitable, ni viable, selon la Fédération canadienne de l'entreprise indépendante (FCEI), qui lance une campagne pour mettre en évidence une « crise » des retraites.

Les travailleurs du secteur public, qui représentent environ 20 % de la population active, ont des prestations de retraite qui font rêver ceux du privé.

<http://www.canoe.com/cgi-bin/imprimer.cgi?id=977636>

Les pensions sous tension au Canada

Les dirigeants syndicaux du Canada ont beau dire que la réforme des pensions ne représente qu'une simple modification de la formule du Régime de pensions du Canada (RPC) et du Régime de rentes du Québec (RRQ) en vue de doubler les prestations accordées aux Canadiens, il revient toutefois aux propriétaires de petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) et à leurs employés d'assumer une importante hausse des cotisations pour faire les frais. Mais oui! Une autre charge sociale qui mènera à la suppression d'emplois et à la réduction du salaire net de chaque employé. Ne vous leurrez pas! Le doublement des prestations ne peut jamais être gratuit!

http://www.cfib-fcei.ca/francais/thematique/81-les_pensions_sous_tension_au_canada.html

Les syndicats s'attaquent à la campagne de la FCEI sur les pensions de la fonction publique

La Fédération canadienne de l'entreprise indépendante (FCEI) a appris que plusieurs syndicats s'attaquent à son initiative visant à sensibiliser le grand public à l'enjeu des pensions de la fonction publique qui sont inéquitables et sous-capitalisées. La FCEI a lancé, il y a quelques semaines, une campagne intitulée « Les pensions sous tension au Canada ». Elle a déjà reçu, dans le cadre de cette campagne, plusieurs milliers de pétitions signées par les propriétaires de PME et des centaines d'adeptes sur sa page Facebook consacrée à cette cause.

http://www.cfib-fcei.ca/francais/centre_medias/canada/120-politiques_sociales/3029-les_syndicats_s_attaquent_a_la_campagne_de_la_fcei_sur_les_pensions_de_la_fonction_publique.html

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67 agences et ministères doivent réduire leurs dépenses

Le président du Conseil du Trésor, Tony Clement, maintient son intention de réaliser des économies permanentes de 4 milliards \$ par année. Cette cure d'amaigrissement vise 67 ministères et organismes, dont le ministère de l'Environnement qui pourrait perdre des centaines d'emplois, selon le syndicat des employés.

<http://fr.canoe.ca/infos/quebeccanada/archives/2011/08/20110804-194439.html>

Tempête à Environnement Canada

Plus de 775 employés d'Environnement Canada - dont près de la moitié travaillent dans la région de la capitale nationale - perdront leur emploi d'ici 90 jours.

Si le gouvernement conservateur soutient que nombre d'entre eux pourraient être réaffectés à d'autres fonctions au sein du ministère, il semble inévitable que certains perdent leur emploi de façon définitive.

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-droit/actualites/fonction-publique/201108/04/01-4423562-tempete-a-environnement-canada.php>