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English Media

November 10

Politics and pensions: the long-term viability of pensions and retirement income

As pensions for public sector employees seem to be ever more bountiful, pensions for private sector employees become ever more tenuous. It seems reasonable to begin asking some serious questions about the long-term viability both of pensions and retirement income.

There are some seriously black clouds on the long-term pension horizon.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Politics+pensions+long+term+viability+pensions+retirement+income/5691317/story.html>

Lawyer's leave causes mistrial

A defence lawyer who was beaten up outside his home last year has been put on sick leave for at least two months, causing a mistrial Wednesday in a murder case and putting everyone in the profession on edge.

"An attack on a member of the justice system, whether it be defence attorneys, crown prosecutors or judges, is an attack on the system itself and regardless of who's attacked, it's completely unacceptable and should be vigorously investigated," said Richard Prihoda, president of the Montreal Defence Lawyers' Association, following a meeting with lawyers and judges.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/Lawyer+leave+causes+mistrial/5685075/story.html>

Arbitrator imposes contract rejected by Air Canada union

A federal arbitrator decided Monday to impose the same contract on Air Canada's flight attendants that they rejected last month.

The Air Canada Component of CUPE, which represents 6,800 flight attendants at the airlines, condemned the decision and accused the federal government of interfering in the collective-bargaining process.

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Arbitrator+imposes+contract+rejected+Canada+union/5673104/story.html>

Balancing books will take longer: Flaherty

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty says the slowing Canadian economy is eroding federal revenues and will delay the Conservative government from balancing the books until 2015-16 at the earliest, a year later than hoped.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/Balancing+books+will+take+longer+Flaherty/5676400/story.html>

Jury duty: Unfair burden or civic obligation?

As jurors in the Shafia murder trial returned to a Kingston, Ont., courtroom Tuesday, at least some of them were no doubt getting increasingly anxious about the financial toll the lengthy trial could have on them personally.

Jurors hearing the Shafia case won't get any compensation for their services for the first 10 days of the trial. In Ontario, jurors receive \$40 a day starting on the 11th day, and the amount increases to \$100 a day if the trial extends past 50 days. They will not be reimbursed for child care or other expenses. Only those who live outside Kingston will have travel costs covered.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2011/11/06/f-juries-analysis.html>

What is the price of justice?

The price tag for the Harper government's controversial new crime bill is still unclear and it probably always will be -- there are no generally accepted accounting principles for justice, crime and public safety -- but just about everyone agrees there will be a net increase in costs to the provinces and the federal government.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/editorials/what-is-the-price-of-justice-133421258.html>

It's the deficit-fighting journey that counts

Jim Flaherty was refreshingly candid about the global economy in his fall economic statement on Tuesday. While the Finance Minister was right to adjust accordingly, he missed a chance to be more candid about the situation at home – or about the policy changes Canada needs to get on a sounder economic footing.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/editorials/its-the-deficit-fighting-journey-that-counts/article2229857/>

Pay tops job satisfaction, survey finds

Employees are more focused on pay and less on whether their occupation is rewarding, according to a recent survey by compensation specialists Mercer. In previous studies, Mercer found most Canadian respondents said job fulfillment was the key issue.

<http://www.moneyville.ca/blog/post/1080296--pay-tops-job-satisfaction-survey-finds>

November 7

More than 6,000 public service jobs to be lost over next three years: PBO report

The Parliamentary Budget Office has dug deep into the obscurity of hundreds of departmental reports on plans and priorities and used the government's own numbers to come up with a unique government employment forecast, which shows that the public service will lose more than 6,000 jobs over the next three years.

Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page told The Hill Times that a clear picture of government employment is important as the government tries to balance the budget by trimming the public service.

<http://www.hilltimes.com/civil-circles/2011/11/07/more-than-6000-public-service-jobs-to-be-lost-over-next-three-years-pbo-report/28738>

Air Canada union slams arbitrator's decision

The union representing Air Canada's flight attendants says it is "profoundly" disappointed by an arbitrator's decision released Monday.

Canada Industrial Relations Board arbitrator Elizabeth MacPherson endorsed Air Canada's position that the provisions be imposed without alteration.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/story/2011/11/07/air-canada-flight-attendants-arbitration.html?cmp=rss>

Steve Sullivan: Omnibus crime bill ignores the true victims

Prime Minister Stephen Harper promised to pass his Omnibus Crime Bill in 100 days and his government is on track. The Commons Justice Committee is hearing a little from a lot of witnesses and most are being cut off mid-sentence. The Committee is moving at lightning speed.

<http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2011/11/07/steve-sullivan-omnibus-crime-bill-ignores-the-true-victims/>

PIPSC vote signals partisan tack on federal cuts

Delegates from Canada's second-largest civil servant union voted Saturday to join the Canadian Labour Congress, a move the union says heralds a new degree of political activism in the face of anticipated federal government cutbacks.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2011/11/07/pol-pipsc-joins-clc.html>

Military prepares to cut civil servants

3,500 jobs may be cut over three years

The Defence Department has quietly outlined to its managers the procedures needed to lay off public servants as well as what such workers could be offered, including two years' worth of retraining and up to a year's salary, according to documents obtained by the Ottawa Citizen.

Cynthia Binnington, DND's assistant deputy minister for civilian human resources, outlined in a briefing that various "mechanisms to achieve reduction objectives" will be used, including a hiring freeze, attrition and layoffs.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/business/Military+prepares+civil+servants/5667648/story.html>

Access-to-info system still stinks, two years later

Two years, three months, two weeks, and one day.

That is how long it took for Health Canada to supply records related to an appearance by bureaucrats at a Senate committee in June 2009 on the H1N1 outbreak.

A second request made at the same time for records specific to the H1N1 outbreak on Manitoba reserves is still outstanding.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/columnists/access-to-info-system-still-stinks-two-years-later-133345543.html>

The provinces and the cost of the crime bill

It is one thing for the federal government to unilaterally pass new tough-on-crime laws. It is quite another, however, to burden cash-strapped provinces with costs stemming from the measures without adequate consultation.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/provinces+cost+crime+bill/5667172/story.html>

November 6

PS professionals vote to join CLC

Historic decision partly because members don't trust government they work for: PIPSC president

The largest union representing professionals in Canada's public service took an historic step Saturday and voted to join Canadian Labour Congress, partly because they no longer trust the government they work for, says its president.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/professionals+vote+join/5664880/story.html>

November 5

Public service professionals vote to join Canadian Labour Congress

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada has decided to join the Canadian Labour Congress to battle against Conservatives' spending cuts that it predicts will cut thousands of jobs and erode public services.

About 55 per cent of delegates at PIPSC annual meeting in Ottawa on Saturday voted for the contentious proposal after a polarized debate over the cost and benefits of joining the broader labour movement. The decision will cost about at least \$462,000 a year — about 70 cents a month in dues for the more than 55,000 members.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Public+service+professionals+vote+join+Canadian+Labour+Congress/5663959/story.html>

Unions won't have to tell more about finances

Speaker derails private member's bill because of tax implications

A Conservative backbencher's private member's bill that would force unions to disclose more financial information was derailed by a ruling by the Speaker Friday.

Bill C-317, which had become a symbol within the labour movement of a perceived government escalation of attacks on unions, was stopped by Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer, who decided the bill should have been preceded by a ways and means motion - required for spending and tax measures - because of the possible tax implications on unionized workers.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/Unions+have+tell+more+about+finances/5661552/story.html>

Things I didn't know about unions

I just love newspapers. You learn such interesting things in them - things you might never have known otherwise.

Take the front page article in Thursday's Citizen about how the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), representing professionals in the federal public service, is considering joining the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). The CLC is the big union central that brings together under one umbrella most of the trade unions in Canada today.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/Things+didnt+know+about+unions/5661622/story.html>

Montreal defence lawyer Gilles Doré assaulted

Another Montreal defence lawyer has fallen victim to violence.

Gilles Doré, a lawyer who has represented clients in many high-profile cases, was assaulted outside his home in Outremont Friday night, according to police sources who said the victim was hospitalized with a serious head injury. Doré, who has at least three decades of experience, was temporarily placed in a coma by the doctors who treated him, but he has since come out of it.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/Montreal+defence+lawyer+Gilles+Dor%C3%A9+assaulted/5663823/story.html>

November 4

Air Canada pioneers pension advance

Recently, the CAW and Air Canada went to arbitration to settle a labour dispute over what type of pension plan Air Canada would offer to future employees. Air Canada wanted to use a pure

defined-contribution (DC) plan; the CAW countered with a combination of a defined-benefit (DB) plan (smaller than what its workers get today) with a DC top-up.

<http://dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/cityregion/article/1453288>

An incoherent approach to justice

If there's one thing from which the federal Conservatives' crime and justice agenda could benefit, it's consistency. When taken together, the omnibus crime bill and the bill to abolish the long-gun registry paint the perfect illustration of incoherence.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/incoherent+approach+justice/5655552/story.html>

Feds beginning to come clean on impact of cuts and freezes, review finds

A review of the federal government's books shows some departments are beginning to come clean about the effect of budget freezes and cuts.

And the information these departments are providing appears to contradict the government's own perception of how much detail it can share.

<http://www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=n13237496>

'You're not going to recognize Canada,' PS union warns of department cuts

The federal government's strategic and operating review will slash more deeply than the five to 10 per cent cuts the government has advertised, the union representing public service professionals warned Friday.

Speaking to delegates at the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada annual general meeting in Ottawa, vice-president David Gray said the proposals that departments are being asked to submit to the Treasury Board are based on budgets that have been frozen, and inflation isn't being taken into account.

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2011/11/04/cuts-will-slash-deeper-than-government-admits-says-union/>